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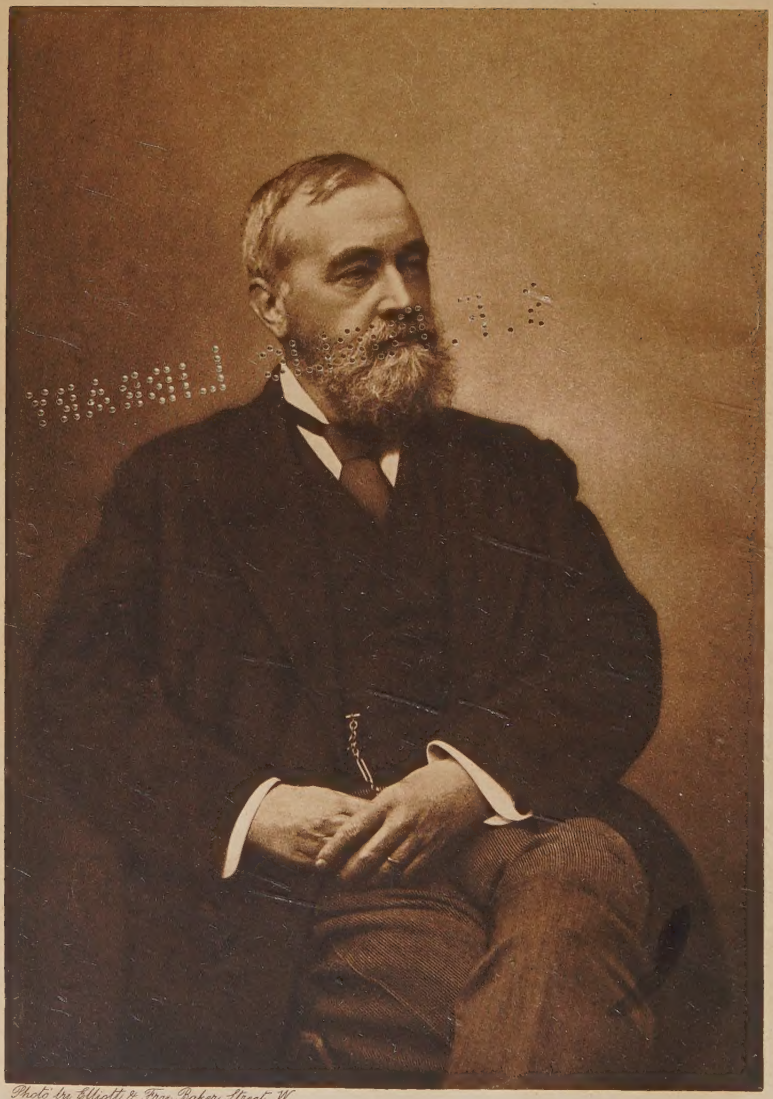

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J Watson

STUDIES IN BIOGRAPHY

BY

SIR SPENCER WALPOLE

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM 1815," AND OTHER WORKS

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONDON

T FISHER UNWIN

ADELPHI TERRACE

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The essays on Peel, Cobden, Disraeli, Gibbon, Bismarck, Napoleon III., and Lord Shaftesbury, are here reprinted, with modifications, from the Edinburgh Review; *those on Lord Dufferin and Some Decisive Marriages of English History from articles which appeared originally in the* Quarterly *and* New Review.

PREFACE

THE history of any age may be written in two ways. The historian may endeavour to trace the progress of events, and to show how the policy of a nation has gradually been modified by an alteration in its circumstances, and in the ideas of successive generations; or he may try to point out how particular men, whose abilities or whose position enabled them to exercise great influence on their contemporaries, have been able to impress their own views on their fellow-countrymen, and to guide or even accelerate the movements, which would, in any case, have occurred.

I have already, in a longer work, attempted to relate the history of this country in the nineteenth century on the first of these methods, and to trace the origin of the great changes which occurred during the course of it in policy and opinion. But, in doing so, I never concealed from myself the part which particular men have played in the political drama. Free Trade would, no doubt, have ultimately been adopted in this country if Mr. Cobden had not lived, and if Sir Robert Peel had not led the Conservative party. But Mr. Cobden was the agitator who undoubtedly played the chief part in convincing the people of the necessity for cheap food, and Sir Robert Peel was the statesman who persuaded the Cabinet and the House of Commons to adopt the remedy. Again, the trend of events abroad must have ultimately led to the

emancipation of Italy and the union of Germany. But it is doubtful whether the independence of Italy would have been accomplished in 1859 if the monarch who guided the destinies of France had not been nurtured on the ideas of Nationalities which the French Revolution had originated; and the union of Germany might have been delayed if a great statesman had not been prepared to work out the destinies of his race by a policy of blood and iron.

The part which great men have played in the development of events, moreover, imparts a personal interest to the historical narrative. We follow with keener relish in the fortunes of a man than the progress of a movement: and, though a nation may be rushing, like some mighty locomotive, through the ages to an unknown future, the spectator may be pardoned for concentrating his attention on the driver, who stands on the footboard and controls the machine.

I have, therefore, thought that there may be some interest in supplementing the work which I have already published by these slighter and more personal sketches of the chief actors in the drama which I have endeavoured to relate. The courtesy and kindness of Messrs. Longman and Mr. John Murray has enabled me, in doing so, to avail myself of contributions made to periodicals under their control. The five men, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Cobden, Lord Beaconsfield, Napoleon III., and Prince Bismarck, who are the subjects of five of the following essays, for various and obvious reasons, seemed suitable personages to select for my purpose.

I have added to the volume four other essays—one on Mr. Gibbon, the greatest of our historians; another on Lord Dufferin, the most versatile of our proconsuls; a third on Lord Shaftesbury, the most statesmanlike of our humanitarians; and a fourth on the Decisive Marriages in English History.

STUDIES IN BIOGRAPHY

SIR ROBERT PEEL

MORE than half a century has passed since a lamentable accident brought to a premature close the life and career of the illustrious statesman who is the subject of this essay. In the interval, we have been gradually accumulating the means of correctly appreciating his policy and his character. The short Memoirs which he himself prepared for publication, to justify his own conduct in 1829 and 1846, have been amply illustrated by the Diaries of Mr. Greville and the Correspondence of Mr. Croker. The admirable study of the statesman which M. Guizot published in 1856 has been succeeded in our own time by the monographs of Lord Dalling, Mr. Thursfield, and Mr. Justin McCarthy; and, finally, Mr. Parker has edited the voluminous correspondence which the statesman left behind him. With these ample materials the British people have, at last, the opportunity of defining the precise place which Sir Robert Peel should occupy in their estimate of the men who have governed England; they can approach the subject free from the passions and prejudices which Peel excited in his lifetime; and they may determine whether Mr. Disraeli was right in saying that Peel was "the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived"; or whether Mr. Gladstone had grounds for

his more generous tribute: "Taken all round, Peel was the greatest man I ever knew."

Robert Peel, the son of the first baronet, was born on February 5, 1788. His father, at the time of his birth, is said to have fallen on his knees and vowed in thankfulness that he would "give his child to his country." He did, at any rate, his best to make his prayer effectual. Like Lord Chatham, he educated his boy for public life. But while Lord Chatham, in the case of Mr. Pitt, himself directed his son's studies, Sir Robert, perhaps more wisely, preferred to avail himself of the advantages of a great public school and of a great English university. At Harrow the future Minister displayed the capacity for taking infinite pains which characterised him throughout his whole career. Lord Byron, who was his contemporary, said of him: "As a schoolboy out of school, I was always in scrapes, and he never; in school, he always knew his lesson and I rarely;" and Mr. Bowen, in his admirable Harrow songs, has preserved the school tradition—

> "Peel stood, steadily stood,
> Just by the name in the carven wood,
> Reading rapidly, all at ease,
> Pages out of Demosthenes."

At Oxford we have his brother's authority for saying that "he read eighteen hours a day;" and this study was rewarded by a brilliant degree. For, in the autumn of 1808, while he was still under age, he took "a double first." The degree was the more remarkable because the examination had only just been divided into the two schools of classics and mathematics, and Peel was the first Oxford man who obtained a first in each school.

Immersed in the studies which had thus gained him distinction both at Harrow and at Oxford, Peel had little or no leisure to examine for himself the great political problems with which it was his lot in later life to

grapple. Living at home, at school, and at college in a Conservative atmosphere, he probably accepted his political creed with as little hesitation as he subscribed his name to the Thirty-nine Articles. In 1808, indeed, few men had sufficient courage or independence to adopt other opinions. The events which had succeeded the French Revolution had been too startling and too recent to permit of a dispassionate examination of political problems. Statesmen like Burke and Mackintosh, poets like Wordsworth and Southey, had been frightened by the excesses which had occurred in France into a panic dread of change; while the incidents of a great war distracted attention from home politics, and made even Liberals doubt whether the crisis of a supreme struggle was an appropriate moment for domestic reforms.

Birth and training had thus made Peel a Conservative (for the modern name, which the party acquired under his own guidance, expresses the facts more clearly than the older title Tory); the course of events abroad had strengthened his Conservatism; and, when he entered the House of Commons in the spring of 1809, he had never found leisure to examine, with any care, the wisdom or unwisdom of the main articles of the political creed which he had inherited. In the spring of 1810 he was selected to second the Address, and the skill with which he executed this duty procured for him in the following autumn the Under-Secretaryship of the Colonial Department. This post he exchanged in 1812—on the reconstruction of the Ministry under Lord Liverpool—for the more important office of Chief Secretary of Ireland.

The six years during which Peel occupied the Chief-Secretaryship brought him many anxieties. The Chief Secretary, in those days, was not merely responsible for the peace of a distracted country; he was also the dispenser of patronage under a corrupt system of government.

"He was beset with importunities for posts as gaugers, hearth-money collectors, revenue clerks, stamp distributors, &c., not chiefly from the candidates themselves, but in larger numbers from persons of position and rank, recommending the applicants, either from family reasons, or more frequently to oblige constituents and electioneering agents. Another class of suitors solicited, for themselves or for their relatives and friends, preferment in the Church, livings, deaneries, bishoprics. Others sought the power, or even claimed it as a right, to appoint the Sheriff for their respective counties, a matter of great consequence. Others, again, preferred requests for peerages, for steps in the peerage, or for Government support in the election of representative peers." [1]

It is to Peel's credit that he did his best to check this system of corruption, which he evidently both hated and disapproved. It is equally to his credit that he endeavoured to carry on the work of his office without favour and partiality, and that he strove to strengthen and improve the machinery of administration. "My constant object in Ireland," so he himself said, "was a fair administration of the laws as they exist, and I challenge the country to produce any instance in which, while I held office, an impartial administration of those laws was denied." Ireland owes to him the reorganisation, or rather the creation, of her constabulary force; it owes also to him the recollection that one great English Minister—throughout his six years of office—usually relied on the ordinary law; and that, when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in Great Britain in 1817, Peel was able to announce to Parliament that he required no exceptional legislation, but was prepared to reduce the military force.

On one subject, indeed, Peel failed to probe the wound from which Ireland was suffering. The country was torn

[1] Parker, Sir R. Peel's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 51.

by faction ; Catholics and Orangemen were arrayed against each other ; and Peel, whose opposition to Catholic emancipation had already procured him the nickname of "Orange Peel," was much more anxious to keep the peace than to devise a remedy for the disease. There is no evidence that, during his years in Ireland, he ever set himself the task of seriously considering whether his whole attitude towards the Catholics was not founded on a faulty basis. Ireland, so he thought, was united by an inviolable compact to Great Britain ; it was an essential article of that contract that the Protestant religion should be the established and favoured religion of the State ; and it followed that he could not admit those who were hostile to that religion to the Legislature. Thus the mere letter of a so-called agreement prevented him from examining the circumstances in which the Union had been accepted, and the intentions of those who had been responsible for it. Many things, no doubt, conspired to strengthen his own convictions. The Viceroys under whom he successively served, the Under-Secretary, to whom he was warmly attached, were all animated by the same views. His own election for the University of Oxford in 1817, moreover, gave him a new interest in maintaining the Protestant cause, and Peel became the chief spokesman and support of the Protestant party.

If, moreover, throughout his Chief-Secretaryship, Peel acted on the unfortunate principle that the Protestant religion should be favoured by the State, he also failed to do anything to remedy the abuses which were destroying the Irish Church. Perhaps, indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that one of the fatal blots on Peel's reputation as a statesman was his refusal to deal with Irish tithes while he held the Chief-Secretaryship. The question even then was ripe for settlement. Yet Peel did nothing, either as Chief Secretary or afterwards as Home Secretary, to remedy this great abuse.

In the course of 1818, however, Peel escaped from the anxieties and drudgery of his distasteful office; and he became free—"free from ten thousand engagements which I cannot fulfil; free from the anxiety of having more to do than it is possible to do well . . . free from Orangemen; free from Ribbonmen; free from Dennis Browne; free from the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs; . . . free from the perpetual converse about the Harbour of Howth, Dublin Bay Haddocks; and, lastly, free of the Company of Carvers and Gilders, which I became this day in reward of my public services."[1]

A man of his ability and position, however, could not hope to be long free. The Government indeed, strangely enough, omitted to provide him with some more acceptable post. But Lord Liverpool prevailed upon him to undertake an even more important duty, the chairmanship of the Currency Committee.

The suspension of cash payments, which had been originally authorised in 1797, had remained almost unquestioned till 1810. In that year, the famous Bullion Committee reported in favour of their resumption in two years' time. But the circumstances of the country, and the great struggle in which she was engaged, made it difficult for Parliament to carry out the recommendation of the committee; and, instead of doing so, it put off the reform till after the conclusion of the war. When, however, peace came, a return to cash payments seemed as difficult as ever; and a further respite was given to the bank. In 1818, the gradual increase of prosperity brought the question once more into the range of practical politics; and the Government decided to refer the problem to a fresh committee.

[1] The letter from which this extract is taken was written to Croker, who was urging Peel, after his resignation of the Irish Secretaryship, to take the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

In selecting Peel for the chairmanship of this committee, the Government probably thought that it had done everything in its power to secure due consideration for the advocates of paper money. The first Sir Robert Peel was well known as a warm advocate of paper money; and Peel himself had spoken, and voted with Mr. Vansittart, on the motion for rejecting the advice of the Bullion Committee; Peel, however, appointed to the chair of the committee, set himself to examine the grounds for his opinions.

"With various other documents, I have read the report of the Bullion Committee with the utmost attention—with the same attention with which I would read the proof of a proposition in mathematics. I can find no defect in the argument."

And Peel accordingly came to the conclusion that cash payments should be resumed. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this decision. Supplemented as it was, a quarter of a century afterwards, by another measure, introduced by Peel with all the authority attaching to a prime minister, it is not too much to say that it regulated and still regulates the conditions on which our currency is issued. Both measures, indeed, were keenly criticised at the time at which they were framed and in later years. But both measures have stood the test of criticism, and have commended themselves more and more to the acceptance of enlightened men. Important, however, as the work was which Peel thus initiated in 1819, and completed in 1844, it has an additional interest from its effect on Peel's career. Peel, for the first time in his life, had deliberately set himself to examine a great and difficult question in all its bearings, and had found that the conclusions which he had inherited upon it would not stand the test of this examination. Such a result was necessarily attended with far-reaching consequences.

Thenceforward Peel was constantly to apply the same process to other subjects; and thenceforward he was almost as constantly to find that the opinions which he had accepted on his entrance into public life would not satisfy his intelligence, and that the conclusions which he had previously regarded as right had to be discarded as wrong.

For some little time, indeed, after the labours of the Currency Committee were terminated, Peel had no occasion for any deep examination of a political problem. Either his own health, or possibly his marriage, which took place in 1820, kept him from any very active participation in the politics of the day; in the early years of the reign of George IV. he twice refused Cabinet office: and it was only in 1822 that he consented to succeed Lord Sidmouth as Secretary of State for the Home Department. He brought to the Home Office the industry and the administrative capacity which had already distinguished him in Ireland. It so happened that a great question was ripe for treatment. During the Regency Sir Samuel Romilly had drawn frequent attention to the severity of the criminal code. Opposed by the Ministry, the Chancellor, the judges, and the Tory party, he had failed to make any impression on a Parliament which hated all reform. After his death Sir James Mackintosh had taken up the subject, and had succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a select committee to consider so much of the criminal law as related to capital punishments. The committee's report led to some slight alterations in the law, and in 1822 Sir James Mackintosh, encouraged by his success, introduced a motion pledging the House of Commons, early in the following session, to take steps to mitigate the severity of the criminal code. In 1823 he brought forward a resolution with the same object, but he found at once that the reconstruction of the Government had entirely

modified the whole aspect of the question. Peel, indeed, refused to accept the resolution which Sir James Mackintosh had proposed, but he offered to introduce Bills to give effect to its principles. In redemption of this offer four measures were rapidly passed abolishing the punishment of death in the case of some hundred felonies. Lord Eldon was still Chancellor, but he did not venture to oppose a reform which had been promoted by his own colleague on the authority of the Cabinet; and the criminal code of England—perhaps the most savage in the world—was at once relieved of some of its worst features.

It is only due to Peel to remember that his labours in the cause of criminal reform did not cease after 1823. They bore fruit in 1826 in a further measure of reform. His inquiries, moreover, into the proper manner of punishing crime led him to consider the means which were available for its prevention. The country—as he said to Mr. Hobhouse, who had been his Under-Secretary—had outgrown its police institutions. The state of the police force in many metropolitan parishes was scandalous. The night watch was in every case inefficient; and in many places there was no night watch at all. Peel gradually substituted for this inefficiency and confusion the admirable police force, which he placed directly under the Home Office, and which still retains much of the organisation which he was the first to introduce. And so closely did his contemporaries identify this force with himself, that the public at once fastened on the men the nicknames which have almost passed into our language, and which are founded on the Minister's christian and surnames.

In ascribing to Peel the merit of these great reforms, it must not be forgotten that, much as the country owes to him in this respect, it is equally indebted to another

Secretary of State, Lord John Russell. If Peel gave us our London police force, Lord John gave us the means of instituting our county constabulary. If Peel abolished capital punishment for many of the less serious offences, Lord John laboured in the same cause and laid the foundations of a rational system of secondary punishment. We should not lose sight of what one man accomplished because we happen to be concerned with the achievements of the other.

During the remainder of Lord Liverpool's administration Peel retained the seals of the Home Office. Throughout that time Mr. Canning and he were the foremost exponents of the policy of the Government. But on one important question these two men habitually spoke on opposite sides, and habitually found themselves voting against each other. For the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool had agreed to treat the claims of the Roman Catholics as an open question, and Mr. Canning was the most eloquent advocate of emancipation, while Peel was still the chief prop and mouthpiece of the Tory party in resisting it. During the first Parliament of George IV. opinion in the House of Commons slowly gravitated towards a settlement of the question, and in 1825 a measure of relief actually passed the Commons, and was only defeated by the Lords. Peel was so discouraged by these circumstances that he tendered his resignation, and was only reluctantly induced to withdraw it on ascertaining that his own retirement would involve that of Lord Liverpool and the downfall of the Administration. He consented accordingly to retain office till the forthcoming dissolution enabled him to test the views of a new Parliament on the subject. The result seemed to justify his decision. The general election of 1826 was mainly fought on the Catholic question. It afforded a decisive proof of the dislike which the English people have always felt to make any concessions to Rome;

and early in 1827 the House of Commons retraced its steps, and in an unusually large division rejected a motion for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics by a small majority.

The Protestant party was undoubtedly elated at this success. But there were, at the same time, circumstances, both in Ireland and in England, which filled them with anxiety. In Ireland O'Connell had succeeded in organising the Catholic Association. He had skilfully evaded the provisions of an Act of 1825, which had been passed with the object of suppressing it, and he had given an unexpected proof of his power by compelling the electors of Waterford to reject a Beresford; and the Beresfords, up to that time, had disposed of Waterford in the same fashion in which the Monsons and Caledons had regulated the representation of Gatton and Old Sarum. In England the Prime Minister had been stricken with the fatal seizure from which he never rallied, and his illness was already precipitating the disruption of the Cabinet. For, while it was obvious that Mr. Canning, already leader of the House of Commons, could hardly consent to serve under Peel, it was daily becoming plainer that Peel, with his pronounced opinions on the Catholic question, could hardly retain office under Mr. Canning. As he put it himself to one of his most intimate friends:—

"Could I with propriety remain charged with the domestic government of the country, I and the Prime Minister being the two men in England most deeply committed on the opposite sides of the most important of domestic questions?"

Peel's consequent retirement from office gave his more Tory colleagues an excuse for following his example. Mr. Canning, deserted by the Tories, was forced into an alliance with the Whigs, and the Catholic question seemed to be approaching a successful issue, when the Prime

Minister, resolved on the emancipation of the Catholics, selected as his Home Secretary one of the leading members of the Whig party.[1]

In politics, however, few things ever happen except the unforeseen. The premature death of Mr. Canning, and the rapid downfall of the Goderich Administration, paved the way for the reconstruction of the Ministry in 1828 under the Duke of Wellington and Peel. A difference of opinion on a small measure of reform led to the withdrawal of Mr. Canning's friends from the reconstructed Ministry, and at last, in the spring of 1828, the Protestants had the satisfaction of seeing a Protestant king supported by a Protestant administration.

Amidst their natural elation at these events the Protestants overlooked two circumstances of the gravest import. A few days before the reconstruction of the Ministry the motion for considering the state of the laws affecting Roman Catholics, which had been rejected in the session of 1827 by a majority of four, was carried by a majority of six. The secession of Mr. Canning's friends from the Cabinet led, among other changes, to Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald's appointment to the Presidency of the Board of Trade. Mr. Fitzgerald happened to represent the Roman Catholic county of Clare, and Mr. O'Connell at once decided on giving the English people a dramatic proof of his power. Disqualified though he was by religion, he appealed to the freeholders of Clare to return him as their member, and the electors, responding to his appeal, compelled Mr. Fitzgerald to withdraw from a hopeless contest.

No single election which has ever taken place in the United Kingdom has been attended with more memorable

[1] Lord Lansdowne did not actually receive the seals of the Home Office till July. But his eventual accession to the Home Office was an open secret throughout the summer.

consequences than the return of Mr. O'Connell for Clare in the summer of 1828. It led the way to changes which have affected this country ever since. But it had a still more decisive influence on Peel's career. He retained his old opinion that the admission of the Roman Catholics to Parliament was undesirable. He was able to avow five years afterwards that his "main object is still the interests of the Church of England," and he could not believe that the interests of the Church would not be affected if men were admitted to Parliament who accepted the supremacy of the Pope. But, on the other hand, he was convinced, almost in a moment, that the events of the Clare election had made further resistance hopeless. As head of the Home Office, he was responsible for the peace of Ireland, and the peace of Ireland was in peril from the growing power of the Catholic Association. The slight restraint which the Act of 1825 had imposed on its organisers expired with its expiration in 1828. It was not safe, so he thought, to conduct the government of Ireland without repressing the Association, ; and it was certain that the House of Commons would refuse the Ministry the necessary means for repressing it, unless it dealt at the same time with the Catholic question. It was always possible, indeed, for an administration to appeal from the House of Commons to the country. But the Clare election had shown what the consequences of such an appeal would be. The example which had been set at Waterford, the lesson which had been pressed home at Clare, would be followed, it could not be doubted, in every county in Ireland where the Catholics were in a majority, and Ireland would obtain the opportunity of speaking with a voice which it was certain that England could no longer disregard.

Thus the events of a single election convinced Peel, not that the policy which he had hitherto pursued was wrong,

but that it was hopeless to persevere in it. Impressed with this conviction, at the close of the session he drew up the remarkable memorandum which he handed to the Prime Minister, in which he declared his opinion "that there is, upon the whole, less of evil in making a decided effort to settle the Catholic question than in leaving it, as it has been left, an open question"; but in which he added that, while he was ready to support the Government in any effort which it might make to carry "a measure of ample concession and relief," he held "a strong opinion that it would not conduce to the satisfactory adjustment of the question that the charge of it in the House of Commons should be committed" to his hands.

Throughout the autumn of 1828, Peel steadily adhered to the opinion which he had thus formed; but, at the commencement of 1829, he was induced to modify it in one important particular. Retaining his strong conviction that the time for concession had arrived, he gradually came to the conclusion that the opposition of the King, of the Bishops, and of the House of Lords made the difficulties of carrying it almost insuperable. He saw that those difficulties would be inevitably increased by his own resignation, and he accordingly decided not to insist on his retirement, if the Duke of Wellington considered his continuance in office indispensable. No one can doubt that, in thus modifying his previous decision, Peel was animated by motives of chivalrous loyalty to the Duke. But few people also will doubt that, in consenting to remain in office, he made a fatal mistake. Impressed with the necessity of concession, he overlooked the fact that there was something more important even than concession, and that was his own character as a public man. A statesman, indeed, is just as much entitled to change his opinion as an ordinary citizen. But then a statesman is expected to pay the usual penalty for his

change by resigning office. It is not desirable, in the public interests, that the man who has risen to be chief of a great party by the assertion of particular views should retain that position—without the consent of his supporters—when he finds it necessary to abandon the policy which he had previously sustained.

It is the more remarkable that Peel did not see the force of these considerations, because he rightly concluded that he could not retain his seat for the University of Oxford when he had deserted the cause which his constituents had sent him to defend. He resigned his seat, and took refuge in the little borough of Westbury. But he surely ought to have perceived that, if his duty to the University necessitated this course, his duty to his own followers required a similar sacrifice. The duty which the leader of a great party owes to his supporters in Parliament is greater, and not smaller, than the duty which he owes to his own constituents; and a statesman has even less right to throw over his supporters in the House than to break his pledges to those who sent him there.

It is true, indeed, that, if Peel had retired from the Ministry, Catholic Emancipation might not have been carried in 1829, and confusion in Ireland might have become worse confounded in consequence. But it is not absolutely certain that the Relief Bill would not have passed in 1829; while it is certain that it could not have been long postponed, if Peel's influence in favour of it had been exerted outside, instead of inside, the Cabinet. Much, then, as we regret that a measure of religious liberty should have been so long delayed, and that it should have ultimately been conceded, not to reason, but to agitation, we are disposed to believe that it would have been better for the country—as it would certainly have been better for the party which Peel led—that the risk of some further

delay should have been encountered, than that the measure should have been introduced and carried by the Minister who had spent his whole parliamentary life in opposing it.

The passage of the Emancipation Act, it must be recollected, was not merely the turning-point in Peel's career: it marked also a crisis in the history of the country. The irritation which it provoked among the old Tories produced dissensions, which led directly to the fall of the Government in 1830, and to the passage of the Reform Act in 1832. The Whigs might never have obtained the majority which enabled them to acquire power, if many of the older Tories had not been much more anxious to punish the apostasy of Peel than to prevent the formation of a Whig ministry.

Mr. Parker, in one of his excellent notes, has quoted a saying of Mr. Gladstone: "As there were two Pitts, one before, the other after, the French Revolution; so there were two Peels, one before, the other after, Parliamentary Reform." No doubt this fact, which we thank Mr. Parker for emphasising, was mainly due to the new conditions which the passage of the Reform Act introduced into politics. But it is worth observing that two events, immediately before the Reform Act, liberated Peel from some of the more Conservative influences by which he had been previously surrounded. For—as we have already seen—in 1829 he severed his connection with Oxford, and in 1830 he lost his father.

We trust that, in laying stress on these incidents, we shall not be thought to infer that Peel, before 1829, suppressed his real opinions from any desire to retain the support of his constituents or to win the approval of his father. His conduct both in 1829 and in 1819 relieves us from the necessity of replying to such a charge. But the views of each of us are insensibly affected by the society

in which we live and the atmosphere in which we move. Communicating, throughout their joint lives, on terms of the utmost intimacy with his father, Peel must have been affected by the earnest convictions of the shrewd old man, who had in various ways done so much to promote the Minister's fortunes. Again, he would have been hardly human if he had not desired the good opinion of the University, where he had won his first distinction, and which had rewarded him with its confidence. But, after 1830, he was freed from both these influences. He had no longer to consider whether any particular course which he took might give his old father pain, or whether it would be acceptable or unacceptable to his University friends. We do not say of Peel, as a later statesman said of himself, that he was "unmuzzled" by his defeat at Oxford. But we do say that thenceforward, instead of resisting reform as equivalent to revolution, he welcomed reform as the best method of resisting revolution. He had the good sense to treat the Reform Act itself as "a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question," and in the Tamworth Manifesto, in 1834–35, he declared himself in favour of reforming every institution which really required reform.

His conduct in Parliament fully justified this declaration. Any one who has studied the debates of the Reformed House must have been struck with the exceptional position which he occupied. Leader only of a small and discontented minority, he became almost at once the most considerable person in the House. The fact is that the Reformed House was much better suited to Peel than the unreformed Parliament. Sprung from the middle classes himself, his success, his wealth, and his education had not estranged him from the people; and, though he had resisted the enfranchisement of the Ten Pound Householders, he knew and represented their real opinions more

accurately than the Whig Ministers succeeded in doing. His voice was always raised in favour of moderation. He refused in 1835 to support the amendments which Lord Lyndhurst had persuaded the Lords to introduce into the Corporation Bill; he refused in 1837 to commit himself to an uncompromising opposition to the reform of Irish municipalities; he laid the foundations for the reform of the Church of England by the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835, and the Irish Tithe Bill was ultimately settled on the lines which he had himself laid down. He declined, on the one hand, to be swayed from his moderate course by the views of extreme men on his own side of the House. He refused, on the other, to gain any temporary advantage by any sort of arrangement with the extreme men on the other side. His conduct was not always agreeable to his friends and his own colleagues. But it steadily raised his reputation in the House and in the country, so that the man who in 1833 had been the impotent leader of a discredited party, was everywhere regarded in 1841 as the only possible Prime Minister. The Duke of Wellington, after the Reform Act, had proposed the historic question, How is the King's Government to be carried on? And Peel, by his conduct, had given a practical answer to the inquiry.

In these years of opposition Peel made few or no mistakes in his conduct towards his opponents; but he made some mistakes in his treatment of his friends. He was too cold to win their love, too reserved to command at all times their confidence. Mr. Parker's pages show conclusively that his relations even with the Duke of Wellington were frequently strained. In 1834 we find Mr. Arbuthnot complaining that the Duke and Peel seldom meet, and that, when they met at his rooms, they did not exchange a single word with one another.

Again, in 1840 we find him declaring "with the greatest sorrow that between the Duke and Peel there is now no communication." The separation of the two leaders does not seem to have arisen from any difference of opinion, but to have been mainly due to the strange reserve which Peel habitually maintained. Happily however, in the autumn of 1840 the icy barrier which separated these two great men was thawed by the warmth of their friends; and when the crisis of 1841 arrived the two leaders of the Tory party were in close communication and in cordial agreement.

When the Whig Ministry finally fell in 1841 it bequeathed a legacy of difficulty, both abroad and at home, to its successors. We cannot in this essay attempt to trace the course of events abroad. At home, the country was passing through a period of distress that has probably no parallel in its annals, and this distress had involved a series of deficits in the revenue, which had risen year by year till in 1841–42 the deficiency stood at nearly £2,500,000.

The Whig Ministry had made several efforts to remedy this state of things. In 1840 the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a futile attempt to meet the deficit by increasing taxation all round. In 1841 he had more wisely endeavoured to overcome the crisis by alterations in the direction of Free Trade. The fall of the Whigs, however, interfered with the adoption of this proposal, and when Peel assumed office in 1841 no remedy had been found either for the distress under which the nation was groaning, or for the recurring deficits which were throwing its finances into confusion.

The remedy which Peel applied to this state of things, and which he devised after an interesting correspondence with his colleagues, was based on the conviction that high duties were making all articles so costly that the con-

suming classes were unable to purchase them. By reducing duties, by making this country—as he put it to Mr. Croker—"a cheap country to live in," he hoped to increase consumption, and concurrently to benefit the revenue. In no case, indeed, did he part with the policy of Protection, which had commended itself for so many years both to the Legislature as a whole and to his own political friends in particular. Moderate Protection he still thought desirable, but duties which were practically prohibitive he rejected as unnecessary. He supplied the cost of these reforms, and of terminating the deficit, by an income tax of 3 per cent., or, more exactly, of sevenpence in the pound.

These proposals did not commend themselves to all of Peel's colleagues. The Duke of Buckingham retired from the Cabinet—oddly enough accepting the Garter from the Minister whom he thus deserted—and Lord Hardwicke from the Government. They were equally distasteful to various parties in the House. The extreme Tories were alarmed at the prospect of a general reduction of prices. The Free Traders declared the new Corn Bill to be an insult to a suffering nation. But Peel's majority was so large, his influence was so great, that the issue was never in doubt. His measures were carried in the form in which they were introduced, and experience justified the course which the Minister had pursued. The country slowly recovered from the terrible distress which it had undergone. Trade improved, consumption was stimulated, and no serious fall in prices affected either the landed interest or the working classes. Encouraged by these circumstances, Peel, in 1845, followed up his success with a still more memorable Budget. Advancing a step further in the direction of Free Trade, he swept away with one stroke of the pen more than one half of the import duties with which the Customs Tariff was still encumbered, and with

another stroke abolished all the export duties. At the same time he endeavoured to brighten the homes of the people by repealing the duties on glass; he tried to increase their employment by remitting the duties on cotton-wool.

These great fiscal changes were received with profound distrust by the Tory party, and Mr. Disraeli, giving expression to their feeling, made his famous declaration that a Conservative Government was an organised hypocrisy. Sir James Graham wrote prophetically:—

"I am aware of the fact that our country gentlemen are out of humour, and that the existence of the Government is endangered by their present temper. . . . If we have lost the confidence and goodwill of the country party, our official days are numbered. But the time will come when this party will bitterly deplore the fall of Sir Robert Peel, and when in vain they will wish that they had not overthrown a Government which its enemies could not vanquish, but which its supporters abandoned and undermined."

It so happened that the irritation which the Tories felt at the fiscal legislation of the Government was increased by the measures which Peel simultaneously introduced to remedy the grievances of Ireland. It is highly to Peel's credit that, strenuously as he had resisted, and reluctantly as he had conceded, Catholic Emancipation, he endeavoured, when he attained high office, loyally to carry out the spirit of the Act.

"We must," so he wrote to Sir James Graham in 1843, "*look out* for respectable Roman Catholics for office. There are many grounds for not rigidly acting in Ireland on that specious principle that, if Protestants are better qualified for appointments that fall vacant, Protestants ought to be preferred to Catholics. Depend upon it, we must discard that favourite doctrine of Dublin Castle:

'You cannot conciliate your enemies, therefore give everything to the most zealous of your friends.'"

He wrote, two months afterwards, to the Lord-Lieutenant:—

"I admit that political considerations would not justify a bad appointment of any kind, still less a bad judicial appointment. But I must, on the other hand, express my strong opinion that considerations of policy, and also of justice, demand a liberal and indulgent estimate of the claims of such Roman Catholics as abstain from political agitation. What is the advantage to the Roman Catholics of having removed their legal disabilities, if somehow or other they are constantly met by a preferable claim on the part of Protestants, and if they do not practically reap the advantage of their nominal equality as to civil privilege?"

And he did not confine himself to administrative remedies only. In 1843 he appointed the famous Devon Commission, and in 1845, the year in which the second of his great Budgets strained the allegiance of the Tory party, his Government introduced three measures—one to give effect to some of the recommendations of the Devon Commission, and thus afford a little security to the Irish tenant; a second to increase the grant annually made to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth; and a third for the institution of three colleges, conducted on unsectarian principles, in the north, west, and south of Ireland, and affiliated to an unsectarian university in Dublin. The first of these measures, introduced by Lord Stanley in the Lords, was stifled by the opposition of the ultra-Tories. The two others became law, but they provoked an intensity of feeling which has hardly a parallel in our annals. "The Carlton Club," wrote Greville, "was in a state of insurrection, and full of sound and fury. The disgust of the Conservatives, and their hatred of Peel,

keep swelling every day." But Peel calmly disregarded the anger which he had excited. Steadily and with unbending resolution he pushed the Bill [the Maynooth Bill] against the clamour of the Church, of the extreme Conservatives, and of the country. 'The Bill,' he wrote to Lord Brougham, 'must pass. I will concentrate all my efforts to pass it. If the Bill be secured, I care comparatively little for the consequences.'" And so opposition was swept away, and shrank back before him, and the Bill became law.

Few sessions in the history of Parliament have been more memorable than that of 1845, for few sessions have witnessed such successes as Peel secured in the Budget, in the Maynooth Bill, and in the establishment of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland. Yet, though the victory had been won, it had been gained at the expense of the party which Peel nominally led. It was the aid of the Liberals which had secured the passage of the Maynooth Bill; it was the aid of the Nonconformists which had secured the institution of the Queen's Colleges; it was the aid of the Free Traders which had secured the passage of the Budget. All the principles that country gentlemen and country clergy held most dear were being set aside by Peel. He was betraying—so they thought—the landed interest by sacrificing Protection; he was betraying the Church by the increased endowment of Rome; he was betraying religion itself by the institution of godless colleges.

Thus, if Peel could retire to the country for his summer holiday with the satisfaction of knowing that he had accomplished a great work, he had the mortification of reflecting that he had alienated the affections of a great party. As the summer of 1845 wore on, however, he must have forgotten any anxiety which the past may have inspired in his deep apprehensions for the immediate future. The clouds were declaring war against the

Ministry. We think it was Lord John Russell who said, early in the forties, "I do not know whether the present Ministers are a better Government than we were, but I know that they have had much better weather." He could not have repeated that reflection in 1845. A wet spring was followed by a wet summer; "summer passed and autumn came, and still the rains were falling which were to rain away the Corn Laws."

The first effect of the rain was to raise the price of corn. The price of wheat steadily rose, till in the autumn it reached sixty shillings a quarter. But with the autumn came more serious news than the rise in the price of wheat, for it was suddenly announced that disease had attacked the potato, which was almost the sole support of millions of the Irish people; it was certain that the Ministry had to deal with famine, and famine on an unprecedented scale.

In these circumstances Peel summoned the Cabinet, and proposed to his colleagues that they should issue an Order in Council suspending the duty on corn, that they should convene Parliament for November 27th, ask for its covering authority for the Order issued on their own responsibility, and at the same time announce that after the Christmas recess the Legislature would be invited to modify the existing Corn Law. The course which Peel thus recommended was not wholly without precedent. Nearly twenty years before, in 1826, he had been a member of a ministry which had induced the Legislature to authorise the introduction of a limited quantity of foreign corn, in defiance of the provisions of the existing Corn Laws. But the precedent, such as it was, was not likely to commend itself to the country gentlemen. For the measure of 1826 had been succeeded by the Corn Law of 1828, and it seemed difficult to resist the conclusion that suspension in 1845 would be followed by a similar consequence.

Instead, therefore, of adopting the Prime Minister's advice, the Cabinet—or those members of it who disliked the proposal—contended that there was no occasion for serious alarm, or for any prompt remedy. After three meetings, Ministers separated on November 6th, agreeing to reassemble on the 25th. Up to this time only three members of the Cabinet—Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert—were on the side of Peel.

When the Cabinet reassembled on November 25th, the news from Ireland increased the intensity of the crisis. Ministers could no longer contend that there was no occasion for serious alarm or for a prompt remedy. While they, moreover, were hesitating, the leader of the Opposition was acting. Lord John Russell, in his famous Edinburgh letter, had avowed on the 22nd that his own views were altered, that it was "no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty," and had called on the people to "unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture."

If Lord John Russell's views had been suddenly altered in the presence of a grave crisis, "a momentous change was in process in the mind of the Prime Minister."

"Up to 1844 he had remained resolute in the maintenance of his Corn Laws. . . . In speaking on the Address early in [that year] he said: 'I believe the abolition of the Corn Laws would produce great confusion and distress. I can say, with truth, that I have not contemplated, and do not contemplate, an alteration in the present Corn Law.'"[1]

Towards the close of the session of 1845, however, close observers detected a marked alteration in the Minister's language. In that year "he delivered three speeches of importance, in which he dealt with the ques-

[1] Parker, "Sir Robert Peel's Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 597.

tion of the Corn Laws. On each of these occasions he stated the same thing: that his policy was one of gradual relaxation of duties, but that he could not consent to the immediate and total abolition of the Corn Laws. Yet the direction in which his mind was tending was plain. Lord Howick, at the conclusion of the last night's debate, very truly observed that the right hon. baronet's speech was an unanswerable one in favour of the gradual abolition of the duties on corn." [1]

In short, there can be little doubt that Peel had slowly arrived at the conclusion that there was no reason why he should not apply to corn the principles which he was already applying to other commodities—why he should not gradually replace prohibitive duties with moderate duties and moderate duties with Free Trade.

It required, indeed, the pressure of famine to drive home these conclusions. If the potatoes had not rotted in the ground in 1845, Peel would probably have adhered to his old policy of gradual progress. But the prospect of famine left him, as he thought, no alternative. The advice which he had given to the Cabinet in the end of October he repeated even more strongly at the end of November. Two of his colleagues, the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Stanley, refused to support him. Peel, believing it to be hopeless to persevere with a divided Cabinet, resigned office, and the Queen sent for Lord John Russell, and entrusted him with the task of forming an administration.

It does not fall within our present province to relate the circumstances which prevented Lord John from fulfilling the duty which was thus confided to him. It is sufficient to say that he failed to reconcile the differences of some of his leading supporters, and on December 20th found himself compelled to abandon his attempt. The Queen

[1] Parker, "Sir Robert Peel's Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 599.

thereupon naturally returned to her old advisers, and begged Peel not to desert her in a moment of difficulty, but to resume office. Peel immediately replied: "I want no consultations, no time for reflection. I will be your Minister, happen what may." But we must leave Mr. George Peel to relate the conclusion of the story:—

"Immediately on Sir Robert's return to London, the members of the late Cabinet were summoned and met in Downing Street. One then living with the Prime Minister has told me of that night. They began to assemble after nine o'clock, Graham first, then Wellington, then the rest. The junior members of the Ministry, who knew nothing, settled themselves down to hear that they were out, and that Lord John was in. The Prime Minister rose. He announced that he was in, and that Lord John was out; would they support him? There was a dead silence. . . . The silence was at length broken. Stanley declined point-blank. Then was uplifted the voice of the master of many legions, who so often had sharpened the edge of battle and saved the day. Wellington said that he was delighted. He should have done himself exactly what Peel had done. He had opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws. But, in his view, the Queen's Government was more important than the Corn Laws, or any other law. This turned the situation; the rest agreed, and the Minister was himself again."

For the second time in his life Peel was now committed to the unpardonable sin, in a party sense, of an abrupt change of policy. Just as in 1829 the incidents of the Clare election induced him suddenly to recommend the emancipation of the Catholics, which he had spent his life in opposing, so in, 1845, the prospects of Irish famine induced him to give up the Corn Laws. It is natural that in these circumstances the two events should be closely associated in men's minds, and that Peel's conduct on the

one occasion should be regarded as an exact parallel to his conduct on the other. But a little reflection will show that there was a broad distinction between the two cases. In the first place, in 1829, Peel's conversion was sudden. In 1845 it had been gradual. The whole history of his Ministry from 1841 to 1846 shows a steady progress towards Free Trade measures, and the tariff of 1846 was little more than the logical consequence of the Budget of 1842. But, in the next place, in 1845 Peel paid the penalty which, in our judgment, he would have done better if he had paid in 1829. He tendered to the Crown the resignation of his office. It is true that he resumed power when the Whigs failed to form a ministry. But even the most extreme partisan will hesitate to condemn him on this account. The rules of party warfare require, or should require, a minister when he changes his policy to resign his trust. But when his adversaries fail to form a government, the rules of party warfare do not forbid, while duty to the Crown and public demands, that he should resume office.

We think, then, that even in a party sense there is a justification for Peel's conduct in 1845 which it is difficult to find for it in 1829. But the men who thought that they were betrayed by their leader could not, perhaps, have been expected to draw nice distinctions of this kind. To many of them, indeed, the later apostasy seemed much more serious than the first; for while the policy of 1829 only touched their creed, the policy of 1845–46 touched their pockets. Peel had already done much—so they thought—to diminish the rent of land; but the profits of real property would disappear, its burdens only would remain, under a new Corn Law.

The Tories were the more angry because, while they felt themselves betrayed, they were conscious that they were powerless. All their best speakers in the House of

Commons were either in the Cabinet or in the Government. The Whig leaders, to whom they might otherwise have turned in their distress, had already declared for Free Trade. There seemed literally to be no one whom they could oppose to Peel and Sir James Graham. But crises are apt to produce men, and when Parliament met, the country gentlemen had the satisfaction of finding that there was at least one man in the House of Commons who was as eager as they were to wound, but who, unlike themselves, was not afraid to strike, the Minister. And in their anxiety for revenge they ranged themselves—perhaps they had no alternative but to range themselves—under a brilliant but unscrupulous adventurer.

Mr. Disraeli—who won his spurs in Parliament by his denunciation of Peel—had, in 1841, been a candidate for office. Undeterred, however, by the recollection of any applications which he might have made in the past, Mr. Disraeli set himself to attack and obstruct the Minister; and it must be admitted that uncompromising attack and unscrupulous obstruction have hardly ever been more successfully conducted. It so happened that the policy of the Ministry aided these tactics. Peel never did anything by halves. Difficult as was the task which he had set himself of repealing the Corn Laws, he made it more difficult, or at any rate more complicated, by making the reform of the Corn Laws only part of a fresh measure of Free Trade. And, though it was certain that the measure would exhaust the energies of the most resolute statesman and consume the whole time of Parliament, the disturbed condition of Ireland induced him at the same time to introduce a new Coercion Bill. It is more remarkable that he should have thought it necessary to do so because only the year before, in writing to Sir James Graham, he had declared that "there is more advantage in repressing outrage by means of the ordinary laws, and, above all, by

the courage and resolution of the owners of property, than by any attempt to supply the place of courage and resolution by extraordinary laws." The introduction of two great measures instead of one necessarily increased the opportunities for obstruction. On one of them, indeed, though deserted by the bulk of his own friends, Peel could rely on the steady support of the Whigs. On the other he could not be certain of any such assistance. Though Lord John Russell at first consented to support the Coercion Bill, avowing his intention to amend it in committee, the delay in its passage gave him an excuse for saying that it was more convenient to reject than to amend it. He joined, therefore, the discontented Protectionists; and so it came to pass that, on the very evening on which the Tariff Bill passed the Lords, Peel received his final defeat in the House of Commons.

Whatever judgment may be formed of Peel's conduct in office, there can be no dissenting opinion as to his manner of leaving it. No Minister has ever fallen with greater dignity. He asked for no rewards for himself, no dignities for his family. His solitary request to the Queen was that in redeeming her promise to give him her own and the Prince's portraits, "your Majesty will permit the portrait of the Prince of Wales to be included in the picture which contains your Majesty's portrait." He expressed an earnest hope, in a letter which he placed with his will, "that no member of my family will apply for, or will accept if offered, any title, distinction, or reward on account of services I may have rendered in Parliament or in office." One other favour he did, indeed, beg of his Sovereign—a promise that she would never again ask him to enter her service.

There can be very little doubt that, in making this request, Peel did genuinely desire to abstain in future from the responsibilities of power. Office throughout life

had been distasteful to him; and the greatest administrator of his age, or perhaps of any age, hated the drudgery of administration. In his later years, moreover, he felt the strain too much for him.

"I defy the Minister of this country," he wrote in 1845, "to perform properly the duties of his office—to read all that he ought to read; . . . to see all whom he ought to see; to superintend the grant of honours and the disposal of civil and ecclesiastical patronage; to write with his own hand to every person of note that chooses to write to him; to be prepared for every debate, including the most trumpery concerns; to do all these indispensable things, and also to sit in the House of Commons eight hours a day for 118 days. It is impossible for me not to feel that the duties are incompatible, and above all human strength—at least above mine. . . . I never mean to solve the difficulty in one way—namely, by going to the House of Lords. But it must be solved in one way or another. The failure of the mind is the usual way, as we know from sad experience."

Peel's premature death in 1850 makes it unnecessary to decide whether, if he had lived, he could have adhered to his resolution to remain out of office. During the four years of life, indeed, which were left to him after his retirement, he showed no anxiety to win any party advantage. He left to the ultra-Tories, who had deserted him, the task of opposing the new Ministry, while he himself constantly interfered in its favour. It is unnecessary, however, to dwell on the events of these concluding years. Peel's character must be judged by reviewing his conduct in office; it is by the policy which he pursued in office, and not by that which he advocated in opposition, that his place in history must be ultimately determined.

Few people will deny that as an administrator, as a

legislator, and as a member of Parliament, Peel ranked among the very greatest of the great men whom this country has produced. Both in Ireland, where, it must be remembered, he had to contend with the inexperience of youth, and in his long tenure of the Home Office, when he was in the maturity of his powers, he displayed administrative qualities which have never been excelled. In both countries he found the police force inadequate and inefficient, and in Ireland he organised the constabulary; in London he gave us the Metropolitan Police. But it was not in administration alone that Peel excelled all his contemporaries; his legislation is equally remarkable for the completeness with which he dealt with every subject which he touched. His whole soul would have revolted from the modern practice of "cobbling" Acts of Parliament. He was never satisfied with merely introducing some slight amendment in a law to make it applicable to the altered conditions of society, or to bring it in accord with the changed opinions of the age. When he made up his mind to deal with a subject, he uniformly dealt with it as a whole. And it resulted from this thoroughness that the legislation which he gave us has so largely endured in the shape in which he left it. He impressed his own mind and his own will on the Statute Book; and the Statute Book remains to this day a monument of what he accomplished.

If this is true of legislation in general, it is especially true of the commercial and financial legislation of which he was so great a master. He not merely, in 1819, devised the conditions on which cash payments should be resumed; he laid down, in 1844, the principles on which paper issues should be regulated. Both measures aroused keen criticism. In the first half of the nineteenth century men of various parties were fond of pointing out the many evils which they thought had resulted from making gold the

sole standard of value. In the last half of the century, men were equally busy in criticising the provisions of the Bank Charter Act. But neither in the first nor in the last half of the century did these critics succeed in persuading the nation that their own specifics were superior to Peel's prescriptions. His views have not only endured, but they have commanded, as the years rolled on, a more and more general acceptance.

His financial policy is even more remarkable. Other men than Peel had arrived at the conclusion that a tax on income was necessary. But Peel was the first Minister who had the courage to propose it in a time of peace, and to use it as a lever for furthering the cause of Free Trade. In these days, when the drift of opinion in a Parliament elected by household suffrage tends more and more steadily to substitute direct for indirect taxation, we perhaps hardly realise the strength of mind that was required in the forties to tax property for the liberation of commerce. Other men, again, had seen the absurdity of the old system of Protection, which hampered and restricted the commercial spirit of the nation. But they had contented themselves with proposing some amendment in this or that duty. Peel, on approaching the subject, dealt with Protection as twenty years before he had dealt with the criminal code. He treated the whole subject at once. He has had his reward. The reforms which he was able to carry have been extended by some of his successors, but the principles on which the Budgets of 1842, 1845, and 1846 were founded remain undisturbed. They are still the Magna Charta of our commercial liberty.

If, then, we judge the Minister by the completeness, the thoroughness, or the importance of his work, we shall find it difficult to place any other statesman on his level; we shall find it impossible to place any other statesman

above him. But we do not conceal from ourselves that there is another side to the picture; that there are deficiencies in Peel for which it puzzles us to account; and that his own great achievements are his most formidable accusers.

The great defect in Peel's career as a whole is that he never set himself down to consider what the policy of a great statesman in this country should be. He belonged to the Tory party, just as many of us belong to the Church of England, by right of birth. And, till a great question became urgent through stress of circumstances, he went on repeating the stock arguments on the subject which he had inherited from previous generations. Till 1842, for example, he believed in Protection, and he almost certainly concluded that protective duties had the effect of increasing the demand for labour, and, consequently, of raising the rate of wages. The Budget of 1842 proved the fallacy of this reasoning.

"I have six years' experience," so he said in the concluding months of his administration—"during the first three years, high prices and low wages; during the last three years, low prices and high wages; and I cannot resist the conclusion that wages do not vary with the price of provisions. They do vary with the increase of capital, with the prosperity of the country, with the increased power to employ labour; but there is no immediate relation between wages and provisions, or if there be a relation, it is an inverse ratio."

It is remarkable, however, that while he had reconsidered and abandoned as unsound the old view of wages depending on the price of food, he still clung to the equally untenable position that the rate of wages would fall if the hours of work were reduced from twelve to ten.

"This additional restriction of labour," so he wrote to the Queen in 1844, "was opposed by your Majesty's

servants on the ground that it exposed the manufacturers of this country to a very formidable competition with those of other countries in which labour is not restricted; that it must lead to a great reduction in the wages of the workmen, as it is vain to suppose that their masters will give the same wages for ten hours' labour as they give for twelve."

It never occurred to him that there were limits to the endurance of workpeople, and especially of young workpeople whose powers were imperfectly developed, and that a tired boy or girl was just as faulty a machine as a tired horse. The prejudice of the manufacturer survived when the prejudice of the country gentleman had disappeared.

It was, perhaps, this defect in Peel's mind, this constitutional reluctance to examine any great subject till it became acute, which made him so capable an administrator. For the greatest administrators are those who make the best use of the imperfect and perhaps obsolete machinery at their command. But it unquestionably detracts from Peel's greatness as a statesman, while it ruined his position as a party leader. Those who have no doubt that Catholic emancipation was necessary in 1829, and that Free Trade was desirable in 1845-46, may still hesitate to admit that either measure should have been proposed or carried by Peel. The first duty of a statesman is, of course, to his country. But while party government exists it is not easy to separate a man's duty to his country from his duty to his friends. However genuine and right a change of opinion may be, there is something like treachery in using the power with which you have been entrusted for one purpose to accomplish another; and, when the same Minister twice acts in the same way, it is not surprising that his political supporters should call him a traitor.

Peel, moreover, did not soften the effect of his conduct by any of those graces of manner which have kept so many parties loyal. In the House he was an unyielding dictator.

"I would not admit of any alteration in any of those Bills," he wrote to Sir H. Hardinge in 1845. "This was thought very obstinate and very presumptuous; but the fact is, people like a certain degree of obstinacy and presumption in a minister. They abuse him for dictation and arrogance, but they like being governed."

The man who could write in this way was not likely to conciliate supporters by concessions. If they changed their votes "within forty-eight hours on the menace of a minister," they neither forgot the threat nor forgave the man. With his opponents Peel held a still higher tone. We were amazed, on reading Mr. Parker's volumes, to see how numerous were the occasions on which he was ready to meet a political antagonist in a duel. We knew, of course, that in 1815 Peel was prepared to fight Mr. O'Connell, and, later on, Mr. O'Connell's friend, Mr. Lidwill; but we were not prepared to find that, in 1831, he sent Sir Henry Hardinge with a letter to Mr. Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), calling him to account for a speech made at the general election of that year; that, in 1835, he called on Mr. Hume to disavow an imputation on his honour in a letter which, if it had not elicited an expression of regret, must almost inevitably have led to a duel; and that, in 1837, he again employed Sir Henry Hardinge to convey a challenge to Captain (afterwards Lord) Townshend. Even this formidable series of possible duels does not exhaust the list; for Mr. Thursfield tells us that "it is certain that during the acrimonious debates on the Corn Laws, in 1846, when he was rancorously pursued by the leaders of the party which felt itself betrayed by him, he was so provoked on one occasion

that he desired to send a challenge to his assailant." We make every allowance for the change of manners which has taken place in the course of the last sixty years ; but even after doing so it is startling to find a man in Peel's position adopting the methods and the remedies of a subaltern in a cavalry regiment.

The fact is that Peel's temper—though he almost invariably succeeded in restraining it in debate—was naturally hot. Mr. Parker tells us that " Mr. Gladstone sometimes found him peppery." We have heard one of Mr. Gladstone's contemporaries, who knew Peel well, describe his temper in much stronger language. And this heat, which must have been trying to his colleagues and supporters, was not compensated in Peel's case by the warmth of manner which does so much both to conciliate and to attract. If Peel, when he lost his temper, was unusually hot, on other occasions he was exceptionally cold. He had a shy and reserved manner, which chilled his acquaintances. " Peel has no manners ; " such was the Duke of Wellington's description of him. " Il ne se déboutonna jamais," such was M. Guizot's phrase. There were moments, indeed, when Peel succeeded in throwing off this chilling reserve. In society which suited him he knew how to expand. He delighted to gather around him at Drayton men of real eminence in literature, in science, and in the arts. Of one of these gatherings Mr. Parker gives us an insight by quoting a letter from Peel to Prince Albert in 1844.

" I have some very distinguished scientific men on a visit here—Dr. Buckland, Dr. Lyon Playfair (the translator of Liebig), Professor Wheatstone (the inventor of the electric telegraph), Professor Owen of the College of Surgeons, Mr. George Stephenson the engineer, Mr. Pusey Mr. Smith of Deanston."

But we believe we are right in saying that such a

gathering was no unusual event at Drayton, and that these and other men of similar attainments were the constant guests of the Prime Minister.

His patronage of literary men was usually discriminating. When he left office in 1835 he offered baronetcies to Southey and Barrow. He wrote to Wordsworth, to whom he was personally unknown, and asked him to tell him without reserve "whether there is anything which I can do to gratify your present wishes or relieve you from anxiety about the future." He conferred pensions on Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Airy, Mrs. Somerville, Hogg, and Southey. In his later Ministry he offered a baronetcy to Hallam; he conferred pensions on Tennyson,[1] Wordsworth, Sir W. Hamilton, and he gave much-needed assistance to Haydon and Hood. Fortunate indeed was the Minister who had such men to reward, but fortunate also was the country whose Minister had the good sense and knowledge to make such a selection.

In the disposal of other honours he was equally discriminating. In five years he conferred only six peerages, and three of them—Ellenborough, Hardinge, and Gough—were for public services which no Minister could have omitted to reward. He was equally cautious in the creation of baronetcies, and he even advised Sir James Graham "to be as sparing as possible of knighthood. The distinction of being without an honour is becoming a rare and valuable one, and should not become extinct." The cautious abstinence which he thus displayed increased his difficulties as a party leader. "Ten years' exclusion from office," so he told his brother-in-law, "had brought him claims from half the gentry of the country to be made

[1] Mr. Gladstone wrote, on this occasion, of Tennyson: "It appears established that, though a true and even a great poet, he can hardly become a popular and is much more likely to be a starving one" (Parker, "Sir Robert Peel's Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 411).

either peers or baronets." And we can readily understand that these ambitious suitors were not reconciled to the Minister—whose measures were threatening their rent-rolls—by the reflection that there was no prospect for them either of title or rank while he retained the Prime Ministership.

We have now endeavoured, so far as was possible in our narrow limits, to trace the leading incidents in Peel's career, and to weigh the worth of his services. In doing so we have been forced to exclude from our review all reference to foreign affairs, as well as to the extremely interesting correspondence which Peel maintained with Lord Ellenborough and Sir H. Hardinge on India, and to confine ourselves rigidly and exclusively to his domestic policy. We have not attempted to conceal the defects in Peel's character or his deficiencies as a party leader, and we have endeavoured to lay no undue stress on the great services which he rendered to his country. These services, indeed, do not require emphasising. The man who restored our credit, regulated our currency, reformed the criminal code, established the Metropolitan Police, promoted Free Trade, and gave us cheap bread, is in no need of an apology. On the whole, we can have very little doubt that the passions and the animosities which he provoked will gradually be forgotten, and that the achievements which he accomplished will alone be remembered. History will then record that, though Sir Robert Peel had not the eloquence of Chatham, the genius of Canning, or the foresight of Grey, he rendered services to the country which few Prime Ministers have equalled and none have excelled; and perhaps it may then recall the words which Carlyle wrote to him in 1846:—

"By and by, as I believe, all England will say what already many a one begins to feel, that, whatever were

the spoken unveracities in Parliament, and they are many on all hands, lamentable to Gods and men, here has a great veracity been done in Parliament, considerably our greatest for many years past, a strenuous, courageous, and manful thing, to which all of us that so see it are bound to give our loyal recognition, and such furtherance as we can."

MR. COBDEN

HISTORY, as it is related by the best modern historians, concerns itself with facts rather than with men; and busies itself in tracing the causes of events, instead of analysing the characters of the actors. Yet in modern, as in ancient history, attention will always be arrested by the simultaneous appearance of two great men on the political stage, whose lives are passed in constant rivalry. Such instances are familiar enough in the history of republics. In the last hundred years, and in our own country, they have been furnished on three separate occasions. The rivalry of Fox and Pitt was succeeded by the rivalry of Canning and Castlereagh; after a long interval the rivalry of Canning and Castlereagh was succeeded by the rivalry of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield.

A lifelong struggle between rival statesmen is thus a common circumstance. A lifelong friendship among statesmen is a much rarer spectacle. Almost every Minister who filled the first place in the Cabinet for the last hundred years, on one occasion or another, broke from his old friends and was forced into fresh alliances. An uninterrupted friendship among statesmen seems, therefore, almost as rare as an unbroken alliance among nations; and the rarest spectacle which parliamentary government affords is that of two prominent politicians in constant harmony.

Such a spectacle was afforded sixty years ago by two men—Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. Mr. Morley tells us that, "As Homer says of Nestor and Ulysses, so of these two it may be said that they never spoke diversely either in the assembly or in the council, but were always of one mind, and together advised the English with understanding and with counsel how all might be for the best." He might have added that the friendship of Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden was more enduring than that of the Homeric heroes. When Troy fell, Nestor parted from Ulysses. No such result ensued when the citadel of Protection was taken. Only on two occasions of minor importance were the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League found in opposite lobbies ; and, though they occasionally differed on the means by which their political views could be best enforced, they continued to live, in Mr. Cobden's language, "in the most transparent intimacy of mind that two human beings ever enjoyed together."

Richard Cobden was born on June 3, 1804, at Dunford, within the boundaries of the little borough of Midhurst. There is reason to believe that his ancestors had lived in the neighbourhood for generations. One Adam de Coppedone (or Coppdene, as Mr. Morley spells it) was returned to Parliament for the neighbouring borough of Chichester in A.D. 1313, and traces of the Coppedone or Cobden family are found again in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. These traces apparently imply that its members had been once men of substance. More recently they had fallen on worse times. As Lord Beaconsfield made Job Thornberry say of them in "Endymion"—"They had done about as well as their stock ; they had existed, nothing more." On the death of Mr. Cobden's grandfather, in 1809, the little estate of Dunford was sold, and Mr. Cobden's father removed to a small farm in the neighbourhood. For a

short period the high prices which war produced enabled him to support his family. The fall of prices which ensued on a prospect of peace involved him in ruin. Mr. Cobden removed to Westmeon, near Alton. His relations had the generosity to provide for his large family of eleven or twelve children.

Young Cobden, the future statesman, was then a boy of ten. He was sent by an uncle to a Yorkshire school. We know from Dickens what a Yorkshire school could be in the middle of the nineteenth century. The school to which Cobden was sent may not have been a Dotheboys Hall, but it was no pleasant resting-place. He "remained for five years, a grim and desolate time," in this establishment, where he was "ill-fed, ill-taught, ill-used." During the whole of this period he never saw parent or friend, while, once a quarter, he was required to thank his parents for placing him in so advantageous an institution. Happily for the boy, his poverty brought "this cruel and disgusting mockery of an education" to an early end. In 1819, when he was fifteen years old, he was admitted into his uncle's warehouse in London. Even here things did not run smoothly. His uncle and aunt "inflicted rather than bestowed their bounties;" and they objected to the studies which the boy pursued in his leisure hours. Fortunately their censure did not divert him from his books. He found means of access, as we learn from a short biography of him by Mr. Henry Richard, to the well-filled shelves of the London Institution, while his assiduity in the counting-house gradually reconciled his employers to the literary pursuits which occupied his leisure.

Thus employed, the boy grew into a man. When he was twenty-one years of age his mother died. Mr. Cobden had been a good son. He had spent every holiday at Westmeon; he had devoted his little earnings to relieve the shabby poverty of the Westmeon home. But he could

hardly be expected to feel acutely his mother's death. He had been separated from her ever since he was ten years of age, and the chief link between them was only held by memory. The livelier occupation, too, which he obtained at the time would perhaps have distracted his thoughts from a graver sorrow. He became a traveller for his uncle's firm, and in the next few months visited Scotland and Ireland. Travel enlarges the knowledge and enlightens the mind. Mr. Cobden, imbued with "an insatiable desire to know the affairs of the world," found amidst his ordinary avocations opportunities of increasing his information. What is more to our present purpose, he proved himself acute in his observations and graphic in his descriptions. His account of the Irish people might have been incorporated with advantage in a political pamphlet; his description of the captain of the steamer in which he crossed from Donaghadee to Port Patrick is as humorous as a page of Dickens.

The freer life which Mr. Cobden thus enjoyed was soon interrupted. His uncle's house fell in the storm which swept over the financial world in 1825–26, and Mr. Cobden for more than half a year lived a life of enforced idleness. In September, 1826, one of his former employers resumed business, and at once re-engaged his old traveller. Two years afterwards, in partnership with two friends, he commenced business on his own account, selling goods on commission. The new venture was singularly successful. In three years' time Mr. Cobden was enjoying an income of £800 a year. He was on the eve, however, of a more important success. In 1831 Lord Althorp repealed the heavy excise duty which a former generation had imposed, to encourage the woollen trade, on printed calicoes. Mr Cobden and his partners foresaw the stimulus which would be given to the trade by the repeal of the duty, and decided, instead of selling other people's goods, to print

their own calicoes in future.[1] They acquired for the purpose a factory at Sabden, in that beautiful district of Lancashire where the Calder rolls its tributary waters—black now with a hundred pollutions—into the Ribble. Prosperity attended the fresh venture; and, success stimulating development, the firm opened a branch at Manchester. Two of the partners conducted the London business, one superintended the Sabden works. Mr. Cobden himself resided at Manchester.

In the midst of his business he found time for other work. As a boy in his uncle's office he had mastered French in his leisure hours; in Manchester he studied mathematics and Latin. He was as zealous for the education of his neighbours as for his own. He commenced his career as an agitator by advocating the formation of a school at Sabden; he commenced his career as a politician by contributing some articles to the *Manchester Times*. In search of designs for his business he visited Paris in 1833; he extended a similar journey, undertaken in 1834, to Switzerland. With a mind cultivated by travel and study, he addressed himself, in 1835, to the composition of his first important pamphlet, "England, Ireland, and America." In his excellent biography of Mr. Cobden, which stands above the need of a compliment, Mr. Morley traces the publication of this pamphlet to the profound views of government which, he thinks, Mr. Cobden had at that time formed. We, on the contrary, are inclined to regard it as a protest against Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. Lord Palmerston, it must be recollected, commenced, in the summer of 1834, the career of active intervention which distinguished his subsequent administration of the Foreign

[1] This is Mr. Morley's account (vol. i. p. 18), but it is not quite consistent with a letter (vol. ii. p. 363) in which Mr. Cobden says that he was *one of a deputation of calico printers* which urged on the Government the repeal of the excise duty on prints.—See "The Life of Richard Cobden" (Popular Edition).

Office. Long afterwards Mr. Cobden himself wrote that the pamphlet contained many crude details which he would not have printed at a later time, but that it laid down three broad propositions on which he had never changed his opinion: "They were, first, that the great curse of our policy has been our love of intervention in foreign politics; secondly, that our greatest home difficulty is Ireland; and, thirdly, that the United States is the great economical rival which will rule the destiny of England." It would be impossible to give a more accurate idea than this sentence affords of Mr. Cobden's general conceptions of policy.

Mr. Cobden's pamphlet passed through several editions, and the author, stimulated by his success, longed to visit the Transatlantic Republic which he foresaw was to become the rival of his own country. He persuaded his partners to consent to his absence, and he left England for the purpose on May 1st, returning in the middle of August, 1835. Mr. Morley might have pointed out, as a striking example of the benefits which steam has conferred upon mankind, that, though Mr. Cobden was absent for more than a hundred days, only thirty-seven of them were passed in America. Nearly two days out of every three were occupied with the voyages. Mr. Cobden found time in his rapid tour to visit all the Eastern States, to penetrate to the Mississippi Valley, and to see Niagara. The fertility and extent of the great Mississippi Valley made the same profound impression upon him as on M. de Tocqueville, and Mr. Cobden's account of it reads like an extract from one of the earlier chapters of the "Démocratie en Amérique." But "the great glory of the American continent" was Niagara, and Mr. Cobden afterwards alluded to the Falls in a really fine sentence: "Nature has the sublimity of rest, and the sublimity of motion. The sublimity of rest is in the great snow mountains; the sublimity of motion is in Niagara."

After his return to England, in August, 1835, Mr. Cobden remained at home for fourteen months. He found time, amidst his ordinary duties, to follow up his first political pamphlet with a second on Russia. The new pamphlet, like the former one, was suggested by the state of affairs at the time of its publication. Mr. Urquhart was stimulating public feeling against Russia; Lord Palmerston was supporting him in Constantinople; Tories and Radicals in Parliament were indignant at the advance of Russia in Asia, and on the shores of Circassia, at the meetings of the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian sovereigns, and the occupation of Cracow; and England seemed on the eve of embarking on a crusade to support Poland and Turkey against Russia. It was amidst this clamour that Mr. Cobden undertook to prove that England had only a remote interest in Eastern Europe, and that she could not possibly be served by maintaining a Power which had not constructed "one furlong of canal or navigable stream in three hundred years." The true danger to English supremacy, he repeated, did not lie in the advance of Russia, but in the progress of America. The true method by which England could maintain her position was by refraining from costly interventions, and developing her own trade. In his first pamphlet he had proposed the repeal of the Corn Laws, and advocated the imposition of a moderate fixed duty—probably 2s. a quarter—on corn. In his second pamphlet he held up Pitt's commercial treaty with France as an example to diplomacy. In the one he thus sounded the first note of the struggle which he was almost immediately to commence; in the other he defended by anticipation the chief labour of his closing years.

In the autumn of 1836 Mr. Cobden's health gave way, and his medical advisers recommended him to pass the winter in a warmer climate. In accordance with their

recommendations, he visited Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt—where he had an interview with Mehemet Ali—Scio, Constantinople, Smyrna, and Athens. Mr. Morley has published a few extracts from Mr. Cobden's letters and his diary during this tour; and these extracts have given many of us a keen desire for more. Whatever opinion may be formed of Mr. Cobden's political views, there can be only one judgment on the purity of his style and the vigour and humour of his descriptions. We advise all our readers to read for themselves his account of his voyage up the Nile and of his interview with Mehemet Ali.

We have dwelt at considerable length on these passages in Mr. Cobden's earlier life, because they in some measure explain his later career. The education which most public men receive at school or at college Mr. Cobden acquired in the counting-house, in travel, or in his own study. Soon after his return from the East, William IV. died; Parliament was dissolved; and Mr. Cobden was proposed as member for Stockport. He was beaten at the poll, and obtained in consequence a little leisure for attending to his own business. Everything was going well with him. The capital of the firm had grown to £80,000; the net profits had in one year exceeded £20,000; and Mr. Cobden could fairly look forward to devoting an increasing portion of his time to the political questions in which his interest was constantly increasing. In 1838 he threw himself into the struggle for obtaining a charter of incorporation for Manchester; in 1839 he separated from his old partners, and embarked with his elder brother, Frederick, in a separate business; and in 1840 "he took another momentous step in marrying Miss Catharine Anne Williams, a young Welsh lady, whose acquaintance he had made as a school friend of one of his sisters." At the general election in the following

year he retrieved his former failure, and was returned for Stockport. His career had up to this point been one of almost continuous prosperity. If he had achieved no great political distinction, he had fortune, happiness, and friends. He was on the eve of the greatest political struggle and of the greatest political victory of the century; but it may be doubted whether he ever afterwards knew happiness without an alloy.

No complete picture has yet been painted of the unhappy period which commenced soon after the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne, and terminated with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The reader who desires to understand it, and who has not patience to wade through a mass of Blue Book literature, should compare the accounts of it by Mr. Carlyle in "Chartism," by Lord Beaconsfield in "Sybil," and by Mrs. Gaskell in "Mary Barton." In this period the condition of the people of England was probably more deplorable than it had ever been before, or than it has ever been since. Relatively to the population, there were more paupers and more criminals than at any other period of our history. The working classes, maddened by distress, were organised as Chartists or as Socialists. In the course of three years the expenditure exceeded the revenue by about £5,000,000; trade was everywhere stagnant; agriculture was everywhere suffering, and a nation of workmen was idle because no man had hired them. The central fact which engaged the attention of every thoughtful man was the condition of the people. Humane persons, like the late Lord Shaftesbury, desired to amend it by regulating factory labour; free-traders, like Mr. Cobden, desired to amend it by giving the people cheap bread. Some persons may recollect the vigorous arguments with which Macaulay met the objections to a Ten Hours Bill:—

"You try to frighten us by telling us that, in some German factories, the young work seventeen hours in the twenty-four; that they work so hard that among thousands there is not one who grows to such a stature that he can be admitted into the army; and you ask whether, if we pass this Bill, we can possibly hold our own against such competition as this. Sir, I laugh at the thought of such competition. If ever we are forced to yield the foremost place among commercial nations, we shall yield it, not to a race of degenerate dwarfs, but to some people pre-eminently vigorous in body and mind."

But Mr. Cobden used exactly the same argument for urging Corn Law repeal:

"I will tell the House that, by deteriorating the population, they will run the risk of spoiling not merely the animal but the intellectual creature. It is not a potato-fed race that will ever lead the way in arts, arms, or commerce."

A small group of politicians had already advocated the repeal of the Corn Laws. "In 1836 an Anti-Corn Law association had been formed in London": but the cause made no progress. "The Free Traders," Lord Sydenham said with a pang, "have never been orators since Pitt's early days. We hammered away with facts and figures and some arguments, but we could not elevate the subject." At the end of 1838 seven men met at an hotel in Manchester, and formed a new Anti-Corn Law Association. They were speedily joined by Cobden, who soon infused his own energy into their deliberations. "Let us," he said at one of their earliest meetings, "invest part of our property, in order to save the rest from confiscation." Within a month £6,000 was subscribed in response to his appeal, and the Association avowed its determination, "by all legal and constitutional means," to obtain the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. Its members were sanguine enough to imagine that their petitions, presented

by the hundred at a time, would exert a powerful influence on the House of Commons. They soon discovered their error. One noble lord told them that they could overturn the monarchy as easily as they could upset the Corn Laws. The Prime Minister made the memorable declaration that the statesman who repealed them would be "worse than mad." Sir James Graham declared that, if the Corn Laws were repealed, England would be the last country which he should wish to inhabit; and Mr. Villiers, who, on two separate occasions, raised great debates on the subject, was beaten by large majorities.

This preliminary struggle convinced Mr. Cobden that strenuous efforts were necessary to ensure success. He had familiarised himself with the organisation of associations; he had described the machinery of agitation in his earliest pamphlet; he had subscribed to O'Connell's "Rent," and he now threw all his energies into the task of dispelling what he once called the "opaque ignorance" of the English people. The Anti-Corn Law Association became the Anti-Corn Law League; the Anti-Corn Law League published the *Anti-Corn Law Circular;* and lecturers, often the objects of abuse and violence, were sent round the country to educate the people. But organisation, in the first instance, produced no appreciable effect. The majority against Mr. Villiers's motion in 1840 was almost as large as the majority in 1839. In 1841, indeed, the Whig Government made the memorable proposal for a fixed duty on corn. But this, the last resource of a falling Ministry, did not encourage the Free Traders. It was universally felt that the new policy was dictated by the necessities of the Cabinet. The general election, which immediately succeeded, placed the Whigs in a helpless minority, and the Conservatives, supported by Protectionists, entered office.

At that time corn was admissible under a duty which

rose and fell with every variation in the price. When the price of wheat was 73s. a quarter, foreign wheat was admissible on a 1s. duty; but, as the price fell, the duty rose. When the price was at 60s., the duty rose to 27s. 8d.; when the price fell to 50s., the duty rose to 36s. 8d. Sir Robert Peel retained a sliding scale varying with the price of corn; but he threw away half the protection which the agriculturists had previously enjoyed. When the price of wheat was 73s. he retained the 1s. duty; but the duty rose only to 12s. when the price fell to 60s.; it rose to only 20s. when the price fell to 50s. This measure was the first of the great proposals which Sir Robert Peel brought forward in 1842. In the same session he remodelled the import duties. Mr. Morley has told us, in a rather obscure sentence, that he reduced the duties on raw materials to "an almost nominal amount," and on half-manufactured articles "to a nominal amount." What Sir Robert Peel really did was to provide that the duties on raw materials should not as a general rule exceed 5 per cent. of their value; that the duties on partly manufactured articles should not exceed 12 per cent.; and that the duties on manufactured articles should not exceed 20 per cent. To provide for the loss from these alterations and from concurrent changes in the timber and sugar duties, as well as to terminate the embarrassing deficits of the previous years, he imposed an income tax of 7d. in the pound.

These measures constituted the greatest advance towards Free Trade that had been made in England for two hundred years. They ought—so it seems to us—to have received Mr. Cobden's support. He was under no obligations to the Whigs; he proved himself afterwards a warm advocate of direct taxation, and he had every right to be satisfied with a concession which gave up to him more than one half of the cause for which he was struggling. But the

measures, on the contrary, encountered his strenuous opposition. He resisted the income tax; he denounced the new Corn Law as "an insult to a suffering people"; he had persuaded himself that the walls of Protection would fall down before the first blast of his trumpet in Parliament, and he complained that the Ministry had not surrendered the citadel, instead of rejoicing over its abandonment of the approaches.

Thus thinking, he stimulated the League to new agitation. It had already expended £25,000; it decided on spending £50,000 in the next twelve months. "The staff of lecturers was again despatched on its missionary errand. To each elector in the kingdom was sent a little library of tracts." In the autumn of 1842 Mr. Cobden converted Scotland to Free Trade principles; in the spring of 1843 London was startled by the first of the many meetings held at Drury Lane Theatre; Tories and country gentlemen were astounded and alarmed at the organisation of the League; the *Quarterly Review* denounced it as "the foulest, the most selfish, and altogether perhaps the most dangerous combination of recent times";[1] and the Ministry was invited in Parliament to promise that it would suppress assemblages "collected together and addressed by demagogues in inflammatory language."

The Minister was not moved by the clamour around him. He had taken his stand on the great measures of 1842, and he calmly awaited the result of his policy. He declined, on the one hand, to suppress the League; he refused, on the other, to adopt the League's programme. One thing, moreover, gave him confidence in his position. Trade, which had stagnated for seven years, showed symptoms of healthier activity in the spring of 1843. As the summer advanced the demand for labour increased, and the Minister had a right to hope that agitation would

[1] The passage is in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxi. p. 244.

expire as prosperity returned. In this expectation, however, he overlooked one factor. The speakers of the League had hitherto fought the battle of the consumer; the consumer, under the combined influences of higher wages and cheaper corn, was becoming a more languid agitator. But the prosperity which the community was enjoying had not reached the agricultural classes; farmers and labourers were still suffering from a prolonged agricultural depression; their discontent made them fit objects for a zealous missionary effort, and the managers of the League accordingly decided to penetrate the stronghold of Toryism, and attempt the conversion of the agricultural classes. In the new campaign Mr. Cobden was still the chief apostle of Free Trade; but he received effectual assistance from the co-operation of Mr. Bright.

Mr. Bright, like Mr. Cobden, was sprung from the people. In one of his earlier speeches he said of himself, "I am a working man as much as you. My father was as poor as any man in this crowd. He boasts not—nor do I—of birth, nor of great family distinctions. What he has made, he has made by his own industry." Sprung from the people, Mr. Bright had reflected deeply on the causes of the people's suffering. He had denounced "the odious Corn Law," and he was one of the first members of the Anti-Corn Law Association. He has himself told the story of his own summons to be the apostle of Free Trade; often as it has been told, it will bear the retelling:—

"On the day when Mr. Cobden called on me (in the autumn of 1841) I was in the depth of grief. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life and a too brief happiness, was lying stiff and cold in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called on me as my friend, and addressed me, as you might suppose, with words of condolence. After a time he looked up and

said, 'There are thousands of houses in England where wives, mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I advise you to come with me, and we will never rest till the Corn Law is repealed.'"

Mr. Bright had already stood at Mr. Cobden's right hand during the agitation of 1842. He had been elected for Durham in the summer of 1843. He threw himself into the agricultural campaign which Mr. Cobden initiated. The two friends, with other zealous emissaries, attended meetings in agricultural districts, explained the principles of Free Trade, and beat the landlords, in Mr. Cobden's phrase, "on their own dunghill." Country gentlemen, like the late Sir John Tyrrell, who had the hardihood to meet the agitators, fled discomfited from the encounter. It was obvious that it was no longer possible to ignore the League. The *Times* admitted that "it was a great fact;" Mr. Carlyle declared in "Past and Present" that "if he were the Conservative party, he would not for a hundred thousand pounds an hour allow the Corn Laws to continue;" while Mr. Cobden himself, following up the victory which he had achieved in rural England, asked the House of Commons in 1844, and again in 1845, to appoint Committees to inquire into the effect of the Corn Laws on agriculture.

The speech which Mr. Cobden delivered on the last of these two occasions was the most successful he ever made. Sir Robert Peel himself felt its power. "His face grew more and more solemn as the argument proceeded. At length"—so Mr. Morley has told us—"he crumpled up the notes which he had been taking, and was heard by an onlooker, who was close by, to say to Mr. Sidney Herbert, who sat next him on the Bench, 'You must answer this, for *I* cannot.'" The story receives some confirmation from the circumstance that Mr. Sidney Herbert did rise to answer the speech. But we do not think that Mr. Morley's

version of it is correct. Sir Robert Peel was the last Minister who would have delegated to a subordinate a task for which he felt himself unequal. We believe that what did occur is stated more accurately by the late Mr. W. R. Greg.[1] The Tories, while Mr. Cobden was speaking, asked, "Why does not Peel answer this?" and Peel murmured audibly, "Those may answer him who can."

In truth, the success of his own measures had converted Sir Robert Peel to a policy of Free Trade. The country had prospered under the freer system which he had himself instituted; good weather had accelerated the improvement, and abundant harvests had reduced the price of wheat from 65s. to 45s. a quarter. In 1842 Sir Robert Peel had thought that the rate of wages would fall with the price of food. In the next three years the price of food fell and the rate of wages rose. A working man of Oldham, whom Mr. Cobden once quoted, explained the matter clearly enough:—"When provisions are high the people have so much to pay for them that they have little or nothing left to buy clothes with; and when they have little to buy clothes with, few clothes are sold; and when there are few clothes sold, there are too many to sell; and when there are too many to sell, they are very cheap; and when they are very cheap, there cannot be much paid for making them." But, when provisions are cheap, the working man buys more clothes, "and that increases the demand for them, and the greater demand makes them rise in price, and the rising in price enables the working man to get higher wages." In 1845 Sir Robert Peel had adopted the view of the Oldham working man. Staunch Tories saw that they could not trust their leader to fight the battle of Protection; the late Sir E. Knatchbull retired from the Cabinet; and Mr. Disraeli redoubled (not opened, as Mr. Morley has written)

[1] "Essays on Political and Social Science," ii. 356.

'the raking fire" with which he had assailed the Minister in 1843 and 1844.

Though, however, the experience of three years had altered Sir Robert Peel's opinions, the change would not, in ordinary circumstances, have induced him to modify his policy. If the country had continued to prosper, Free Trade in corn would not have been carried in 1846. It was the failure of the potato crop, and not the conversion of Sir Robert Peel, which was the immediate cause of the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Minister saw that the failure of a crop, which was the sole food of six millions of people, must produce famine ; that famine must necessitate the opening of the ports ; and he felt that, if the ports were once opened, he had no arguments to justify reclosing them. The old arguments for Protection, which had apparently rung truly enough in 1842, sounded dull, like false metal, in 1845. He summoned the Cabinet, and stated his difficulties in November. A council of war never fights : the Cabinet adjourned. The crisis, which had looked grave enough at the beginning, looked much more grave at the close of the month. Lord John Russell, adopting Mr. Cobden's principles, declared the Corn Laws "the blight of commerce and the bane of agriculture." Sir Robert Peel formally insisted on the modification of the whole policy of Protection ; and, as he failed to secure the support of a united Cabinet, resigned his office.

According to Sir Theodore Martin, Lord Grey desired that Mr. Cobden should fill a place in the Cabinet which Lord John Russell then attempted to form. Mr. Morley merely records that Mr. Cobden was offered the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. On the day, however, on which the offer was made, the attempt of Lord John Russell to form a Ministry failed ; Sir Robert Peel almost immediately returned to office ; Parliament was assembled, and the protracted debates commenced which ultimately

resulted in the triumph of Free Trade in corn, and in the defeat and fall of the Minister who carried it.

In the long struggle which thus took place, the Protectionists used the arguments of the seventeenth and the tactics of the nineteenth century. They resorted to the old fallacies which had passed current in the days of Davenant; they organised obstruction with a success which Mr. Parnell might have envied.[1] The best help which a Free Trader could give to the Ministry was, to remain silent and save time; and Mr. Cobden, on the whole, preserved silence throughout the debates of 1846. When, however, the fall of Sir Robert Peel was imminent, Mr. Cobden preserved his silence no longer. He wrote to Sir Robert Peel, urged him to dissolve Parliament, and, placing himself at the head of a progressive party, appeal to the country, which approved his policy. Sir Robert Peel rejected Mr. Cobden's advice in a letter which will perhaps be read with more interest than any other document which Mr. Morley has published. He took the opportunity five days afterwards of publicly attributing the victory of Free Trade to "the pure and disinterested motives, the untiring energy of Richard Cobden;" and so, giving the credit to another, the great Minister descended from office, while the great agitator found himself, for the first time for seven years, free to devote his whole energy to his own affairs.

It was high time for Mr. Cobden to examine the state of his own business. Since his partnership with his brother Frederick everything had gone wrong in it. In 1845, he was obliged to obtain the temporary assistance of a small loan to stave off his immediate embarrassments. He made up his mind to leave Parliament and abandon public business, as the only possible method of avoiding ruin. Nothing

[1] Mr. Disraeli, in his "Life of Lord G. Bentinck," writes that Lord George "devoted all his energies to the maintenance of the dead-lock," *i.e.*, the paralysis of Parliamentary business from obstruction (p. 202).

but the generous assistance which he obtained from Mr. Bright and some other friends diverted him from his intention. But the help which thus enabled him to continue at his post only postponed the crisis which was constantly imminent. The anxiety which perpetually harassed him told on his health; a cold caught in the winter of 1845–46 attacked both throat and ear. The prostration from which he subsequently suffered convinced him how much his constitution had "been impaired by the excitement and wear and tear of the last few years." He had the satisfaction in June of witnessing the completion of his own political triumph, but he retired from the contest an enfeebled and a ruined man.

Mr. Cobden's friends, however, had no intention to desert their leader in the hour of his victory. A sum of money was at once subscribed in testimony of the exertions of the League. A small portion of it was invested in the purchase of a library and a bookcase, which were presented to Mr. Bright. A much larger sum of £75,000 or £80,000 was given to Mr. Cobden. No fair critic will complain that Mr. Cobden should have allowed a generous public to repair his wasted fortune by a national subscription. Mr. Cobden's own outspoken defence of himself at Aylesbury, in 1850—"I say that no warrior duke, who owns a vast domain by the vote of the Imperial Parliament, holds his property by a more honourable title than that by which I possess mine"—disposes once for all of the matter. But there is no arguing with a sentiment, and the sentiment of the British people is opposed to subscriptions of this character. Mr. Cobden suffered in public estimation, as Burke and Pitt had suffered before him, from his embarrassments; he suffered, as Grattan had suffered before him, from the munificence of the reward which he received.

The subscription, however, made Mr. Cobden a free

man; and, in company with his wife, he left England, and sought in more genial climates to repair his broken health. His progress was one continuous triumph, and the greatest men in Europe courted the agitator who had forced the British Parliament to repeal the Corn Laws. He returned to England, after fourteen months' absence, in October, 1847; he took his seat in the beginning of 1848 as member for the West Riding of Yorkshire. For the next three years he busily advocated retrenchment. He was the teller of "a miserable minority" of 38, on a motion for the reduction of the Navy Estimates. He published a "National Budget for Financial Reformers to work up to," which reduced the Army and Navy estimates from £18,500,000 to £10,000,000. But he failed to make any impression on public opinion. He even differed from Mr. Bright on the course which should be pursued. Mr. Cobden wished to form a new "League for promoting financial reform. Mr. Bright insisted that no object was worth a real and great effort, short of a thorough reform in Parliament." Mr. Bright believed in large additions to the electors. Mr. Cobden, misled by the success of an experiment in 1845, suggested the wholesale manufacture of 40s. freeholders. The spectacle of a great agitator creating faggot votes is not exhilarating, and no surprise need be felt that the new movement excited little enthusiasm. There was no breeze from without to swell the sails; the pilots in charge suggested contrary courses, and the vessel of Reform drifted no one knew whither on a trackless ocean.

Movements, however, were already in force which were to give Mr. Cobden the impulse which he required. In the summer of 1849, the friends of peace met in congress in Paris, and Mr. Cobden joined them. In the next few months, Lord Palmerston pushed his system of intervention to an extreme by despatching a fleet to Athens for

the sake of obtaining compensation for Don Pacifico. Mr. Cobden, who had begun the year by declaring that he could die happy if he "could feel the satisfaction of having in some degree contributed to the partial disarmament of the world," was convinced before the close of it that disarmament could only be secured by a radical alteration of foreign policy. The force of circumstances drove him back into the position which he had commenced his career by supporting: and the rest of his life was mainly devoted to a vigorous assault upon the system of foreign policy which is identified with the name of Lord Palmerston.

A rapid succession of events in France, which commenced with the publication of a pamphlet on the French Navy by the Prince de Joinville, and which culminated in the election of Napoleon as Emperor, had convinced many people that war must ultimately ensue between France and England. This country in 1852–53 was flooded with panic literature. To quote Mr. Cobden's own words, "the militia was preparing for duty; the coasts and dockyards were being fortified; the navy, army, and artillery were all in course of augmentation; and the latest paragraph of news from the Continent was that our neighbours on the other side of the Channel were practising the embarkation and disembarkation of troops by night."[1] This panic Mr. Cobden set himself to stem by voice and pen. The chief speech which he made for the purpose may be read in the second volume of his collected Speeches. But the pamphlet which he published with the same view will repay perusal better than the speech. In this pamphlet, "1793 and 1853," Mr. Cobden examined the causes of the great war, and contrasted the circumstances of 1793 with those of his own time. France, he argued, was not

[1] This extract is from Mr. Cobden's last pamphlet, "The Three Panics." "Political Writings," vol. ii. p. 269.

responsible for the old war, which was forced on her by the conduct of the English nation and of the English people. France, he contended, no more desired war in 1853 than she had wished for it in 1793; and the panic which agitated England was due to ignorance of what was passing in France. The success of the pamphlet was extraordinary. The *Times* reprinted it *in extenso;* the Peace Society circulated 50,000 copies; and it was translated into many languages, and was read by hundreds of thousands of people. By one of those singular revolutions, however, which occasionally happen, the cause which had inspired it was removed soon after its publication. French and English, instead of preparing for conflict with each other, entered a new war as close allies; and the panic which had alarmed a country was forgotten in the excitement of a new campaign.

We have no intention of attempting in these pages to unravel the causes of the Crimean War. Whether Lord Aberdeen was right in telling Mr. Cobden that the press forced the Government into war; whether Mr. Cobden was right in assuming that Lord Aberdeen was forced into the war against his own conviction, and at the dictation of others; whether Mr. Gladstone lent himself to the delusion that people could be indulged with a cheap war—these are questions that we can no more determine here than we can attempt to consider whether the Peace Society, by propagating the opinion that England would not fight, encouraged the Emperor Nicholas to push matters to an extreme. Here we must be content to notice the effect of the war on Mr. Cobden's own position. He and Mr. Bright "had lived on opinion, they had placed their whole heart in it, they had won their great victory by it. This divinity now proved as false an idol as the rest. . . . Mr. Bright was burnt in effigy. Mr. Cobden, at a meeting of his own constituency . . . saw resolutions carried against

him." The country refused to listen to their arguments against the Crimean War, because, as Mr. Kinglake pointed out, they were known to be against almost all war. Yet the two friends, though they had become the most unpopular men in England, maintained their own principles with a firmness and ability which ought to have commanded the approbation even of their opponents. The greatest oratorical efforts which Mr. Bright ever made were made in the cause of peace. His first serious illness was due to these exertions. Mr. Cobden was almost equally energetic. He was ready with a protest when Lord Palmerston thought proper to describe Mr. Bright as the Honourable and Reverend Gentleman. In the summer of 1855 he made one of his most forcible speeches on the failure of the Vienna negotiation; in the winter of 1856 he published a pamphlet, "What Next—and Next?" as a protest against the further prosecution of the war. Pamphlet and speech made no impression; and Mr. Cobden became so convinced of the futility of argument during war that he determined, should war again break out, never to open his "mouth upon the subject from the time when the first gun was fired until the peace was made."

In the midst of this period—when his popularity had for the first time waned—Mr. Cobden sustained a blow which drove him temporarily from public life. His only son, "a boy of singular energy and promise," fifteen years old, was seized with fever, and died at a German school before his parents knew that he was ill. "Mr. Cobden felt as men of his open and simple nature are wont to feel, when one of the great cruelties of life comes home to their own bosoms." "Mrs. Cobden sat for many days like a statue of marble . . . her hair blanching with the hours." We have no desire, however, to dwell on the details of Mr. and Mrs. Cobden's sorrow. We are only concerned with it so far as it illustrates Mr. Cobden's character. During the

seventeen years of his wedded life he had been a faithful and indulgent husband; but his heart, through the whole time, had been in the work of his life, and not in his home. No doubt there are some women who, like the child-wife in "David Copperfield," are content to sit holding their husband's pens; or who, when their husband is absent on a war which has cost them a brother's life, can sit down, like Henry Lawrence's wife, and compose the touching poem, "The Soldier's Bride." Such women as Lady Lawrence, however, need not excite the envy of their sisterhood, and Mrs. Cobden was not of the stuff of which such women are made. "I sometimes think," she said to her husband, "that, after all the good work that you have done, and in spite of fame and great position, it would have been better for us both if, after you and I married, we had gone to settle in the backwoods of Canada." And Cobden could only say, after a moment or two, that he was not sure that what she said was not too true. After his son's death, Mr. Cobden did something to atone for the long absences which must occasionally have made his wife's life very dreary. "I have not been out of her sight for an hour at a time (except at the funeral) since we learned our bereavement; and I do not believe she would have been alive and in her senses now if I had not been able to lessen her grief by sharing it." "She is as helpless as one of her young children," he wrote a little afterwards. "No other human being but myself can afford her the slightest relief. I sometimes doubt whether for the next six months I shall be able to leave her for twenty-four hours together."

Throughout the remainder of 1856, Mr. Cobden entirely withdrew from affairs. In the beginning of 1857 he was drawn back into public life by the attraction of a great cause. In the course of the previous year the Chinese authorities at Canton had boarded the *Arrow*, lying in

the Canton River, and taken from her twelve pirates. The British Plenipotentiary at Hong Kong had demanded the immediate release of the men, and a full apology. The Chinese Governor released the men, but refused to apologise, as the *Arrow* was not a British ship. As a matter of fact the Chinese Governor was right. The license which the British authorities had granted to the *Arrow* had expired some ten days before the alleged outrage had been committed. But the British Plenipotentiary did not wait to examine the facts. He insisted on the apology ; bombarded Canton, and commenced the Chinese War. It was, of course, open to the Ministry to disown the conduct of its Plenipotentiary. With, perhaps, more generosity than prudence, it decided on supporting him. No other course could have been expected from Lord Palmerston, whose politics, in Mr. Morley's language, "never got beyond Civis Romanus, especially when he was dealing with a very weak Power."

The British Plenipotentiary at Hongkong was the late Sir John Bowring, a Liberal, the friend of Mr. Cobden, once a member of the Anti-Corn Law League and of the Peace Society. Mr. Cobden, however, was not deterred by this circumstance from attacking his policy. He emerged from his retirement to propose the famous Resolution which dealt a deathblow to the Parliament of 1852. By a majority of 16 the House declared that the violent measures resorted to at Canton were not justified : and Lord Palmerston appealed to the country. The Civis Romanus policy, however, was popular with the electors. Lord Palmerston secured a large majority. "The Manchester School was routed." Mr. Cobden, who gave up his seat for the West Riding, was defeated at Huddersfield. Mr. Bright and Mr. Milner Gibson were at the bottom of the poll at Manchester. Nothing like the election had been "seen since the disappearance of the

Peace Whigs in 1812, when Brougham, Romilly, Tierney, Lamb, and Horner all lost their seats."

For more than two years after the election of 1857 Mr. Cobden remained out of Parliament. In a public sense these two years were the least eventful of his career. He made no speech in them which Mr. Bright and Mr. Thorold Rogers have thought it worth while to preserve; he wrote no pamphlets. His private embarrassments partly accounted for his public silence. The testimonial, which had been presented to him in 1846, had not permanently relieved him from difficulty. With part of the money he had extricated himself from his liabilities; with another part he had purchased the little estate at Dunford, on which he had been born, and on which he thenceforward resided. The residue he invested in the shares of the Illinois Central Railway. Mr. Cobden imagined that the resources of the great valley through which the line ran would make it a valuable property; he failed to see that time was necessary to develop even such resources as those of the Mississippi Valley. He had expected dividends, and, instead of dividends, calls were made on his shares. Mr. Cobden, reluctant to sell at a loss, was forced to borrow money to pay the calls. Instead of getting rid of a liability, he had, of course, only changed his creditor: and the old embarrassments soon returned in a new form. Mr. Thomasson, of Bolton, hearing that Mr. Cobden was "embarrassed by one of these outstanding loans, released the shares and sent them to him with a request that he would do him the favour to accept their freedom at his hands, 'in acknowledgment of his vast services to his country and mankind.'" On a later occasion Mr. Thomasson repeated his noble conduct; and, as Mr. Cobden's embarrassments continued to increase, a group of his most intimate friends met together and subscribed £40,000 to relieve him from them.

It is painful to dwell on the embarrassments of a distinguished man. It is much more painful to do so when there is nothing connected with them which it is easy to excuse. We pity a man who speculates with his own money, and loses it; but we apply a harsher term than pity to him who speculates with the money of other people. It is perhaps hardly fair to say that Mr. Cobden speculated with other people's money; but he speculated with money liberally subscribed for him by his friends with the express object of permanently relieving him from pressing embarrassments. We cannot help thinking that a sensitive man would have regarded money so received as a trust, and would have invested it in securities which were beyond suspicion.

In connection with this unfortunate railway, Mr. Cobden, in the spring of 1859, made his second journey to America. Many things happened during his three months' absence from England. The Parliament of 1857 was dissolved; the second Derby Ministry broken up; and he himself was elected for Rochdale. He arrived in the Mersey on June 29, and found a letter from Lord Palmerston offering him office in the Cabinet, and a letter from Lord John Russell telling him that it was a duty to accept it. Such an offer certainly proved that the ideas of government which the ruling classes had formed had been widely altered in the fourteen years which had passed since Lord John Russell had thought proper to offer Mr. Cobden the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. It was evident that the middle classes, who had been made a power in the State by the Reform Act of 1832, and who had been taught by Mr. Cobden in the Corn Law agitation to use the power which they had acquired, could be no longer excluded from the Cabinet, if they chose to insist on admission to it. In 1859, indeed, Mr. Cobden refused Lord Palmerston's offer; and we think that he was unquestion-

ably right in doing so. On all the great questions of public and domestic policy, Lord Palmerston and he held opinions which were not merely opposite but irreconcilable. No advantage could have ensued from their meeting in the same council chamber.

Though, however, Mr. Cobden declined to accept Lord Palmerston's offer, he was destined to perform an important service for the Administration. In the summer of 1859 a casual expression of Mr. Bright's, suggesting a commercial treaty with France, attracted the attention of a distinguished French economist, M. Chevalier. It so happened that M. Chevalier shortly afterwards paid a visit to Mr. Cobden, with whom he was on terms of close intimacy.[1] M. Chevalier urged Mr. Cobden to follow up the hint which Mr. Bright had given, and to seize the opportunity of converting no less a personage than the Emperor himself to the policy of Free Trade. Mr. Cobden, in his turn, paying a visit to Hawarden, talked the matter over with Mr. Gladstone. Neither he nor Mr. Gladstone overlooked the obvious economical objections to any commercial treaty. But neither Mr. Gladstone nor he "could resist the force of M. Chevalier's emphatic assurance" that the French Tariff could only be altered "through a diplomatic act." Free Trade could only be secured by bargaining; and Mr. Cobden and Mr. Gladstone were accordingly willing to bargain for the purpose.

We have no space to detail the arguments by which Mr. Cobden converted the French Government, or rather the French Emperor, to Free Trade.[2] M. Magne, the

[1] Mr. Cobden published his translation of M. Chevalier's "Essay on Gold" in 1859.

[2] There is but one man in the Government, M. Rouher had said—the Emperor; and but one will—that of the Emperor (Morley's "Life of Cobden," vol. ii. p. 254). Mr. Cobden's negotiation was even concealed from M. Walewski, the Foreign Minister (ib., p. 252).

Finance Minister, frightened the Emperor by declaring that every piece of foreign manufacture admitted into France would displace a piece of domestic fabrication. Mr. Cobden reassured him by telling him that "nearly a fourth of his subjects did not wear stockings, and that, if a few thousand dozen of hose were admitted into France, they might be consumed by these bare-legged people without interfering with the demand for the native manufacture." By such arguments Mr. Cobden made his way; and, before the end of January, 1860, was enabled to attach his signature to a commercial treaty. But the treaty only settled principles: the details of the tariff were a matter of subsequent negotiation. Mr. Cobden undertook the duties of the chief place on the Commission appointed to settle these details. The work proved difficult and tedious. Many persons in France, and some persons in England, disliked the negotiation. On its conclusion, "The Foreign Office hesitated to accept the figures without reference in detail to the Treasury, the Customs, and the Board of Trade. . . . The President of the Board of Trade was away in his yacht, and no one knew where to find him." Mr. Cobden had reason to be annoyed with these vexatious delays, which wasted two months of the autumn of 1860.

The conclusion of the negotiation was immediately succeeded by another arrangement. Under the influence of Mr. Cobden, the French Government decided to abolish passports; and the English were for the first time permitted to enter France without the formal permit which had hitherto been required. Mr. Cobden had a right to expect that the freer intercourse to which these reforms would lead would have the effect of promoting peaceful relations between France and England. But the hopes which he formed were apparently doomed to disappointment. While he was converting Napoleon to Free Trade, the

Emperor's plenipotentiaries were closing the Italian war by the peace of Zurich; when the treaty itself was ripe for confirmation by Parliament, the annexation of Savoy and Nice irritated and alarmed the English people; instead of producing peace and disarmament, the French treaty was accompanied by the fortification of our ports and the formation of our Volunteer Force. Lord Palmerston thought that Napoleon had "a deep and inextinguishable desire to humble and punish England;" the English people shared the alarms which the Prime Minister hardly affected to conceal; and Mr. Cobden was mortified at perceiving that the labours, which he had trusted would produce peace and disarmament, were followed by increased distrust and additional military expenditure.

Mr. Cobden was convinced that no real grounds existed for the panic with which England was agitated. He protested against it in 1862 in the longest and last of his pamphlets: "The Three Panics: an Historical Episode." It was the purpose of this publication to show that the alarm of French invasion, which had originated in 1847, which had been renewed in 1853, and which had recurred in 1860, was groundless; that the naval strength of France was habitually exaggerated by English newspapers and English statesmen; and that France had neither the intention nor the means of entering into a great naval struggle with this country. It was time—so Mr. Cobden concluded—that this rivalry of arms should be succeeded by some proposal for mutual disarmament. "It must be remembered that such is the immense superiority of our navy at the present time—so greatly does it surpass that relative strength which it was formerly accustomed to have in comparison with the navy of France—that it devolves on us, as a point of honour, to make the first proposal for an attempt to put a limit to this most irrational and costly rivalry of armaments."

Mr. Cobden lived for nearly three years after the publication of this pamphlet. But he did nothing during these years which requires any protracted notice in these pages. He was growing old, and the infirmities of old age were weakening his powers. "My work," so he wrote in 1861, "is nearly done. I am nearly fifty-seven, and not of a long-lived family. Since I passed my meridian a few years ago, I have found my powers sensibly waning, and particularly those organs of the voice which I exercised so unduly whilst in their prime." His throat had, in fact, never recovered the strain to which he had exposed it during the Corn Law agitation. At the end of 1864 he made one of his longest speeches to one of the largest audiences which he ever addressed. He confessed, in his concluding words, that he rose daunted by the fear that he would not be heard; he sat down physically exhausted by the effort which he had made. He came home "out of order from top to toe." A cold winter retarded his recovery. He was attacked by his old foe (nervous asthma); he was prostrated by bronchitis; and at the end of January, though he had shaken off his active disease, he was weak, and pining for the sunshine that would not come. So little was his real condition known, however, that on the 10th of February Mr. Gladstone wrote to him offering him an important situation in the Civil Service—the chairmanship of the Board of Audit. On the 13th of February Mr. Cobden declined the offer on the double ground that his health disqualified him for the post, and that its duties, connected as they were with an expenditure which he disapproved, would be distasteful to him. A little more than a month afterwards he left home for London, to take part in a debate on the fortifications of Canada. The day was cold, and on his arrival at his lodgings in Suffolk Street he was seized with a fresh attack of asthma. "He lay through

the bleak days watching the smoke blown from the chimneys of the houses opposite, and vainly hoping that the wind would change its quarter from the merciless east." But the wind did not change; the asthma grew worse; bronchitis supervened; and on the morning of Sunday, April 2, Mr. Cobden passed away.

Having thus sketched Mr. Cobden's career, we must attempt to pass judgment on his character and policy. And, in doing so, no fair critic will overlook the many amiable qualities which he displayed as son, brother, husband, father, and friend. Mr. Bright spoke of him in the House of Commons as "the manliest and gentlest spirit that ever tenanted a human form;" and there are many passages in Mr. Morley's book which illustrate Mr. Bright's warm panegyric. It is, however, with Mr. Cobden's public character—not his private virtues—that we are at present concerned. And, in dealing with his public career, two qualities especially arrest our attention. The first is the amazing industry with which he acquired information; the second, the extraordinary clearness with which he made a difficult subject plain. The extent of his information was always remarkable. It perhaps attracted most notice in his agricultural speeches. Confident country gentlemen imagined that they could easily expose the ignorance of the Manchester Cotton Spinner —as they inaccurately called him—who had the presumption to come and talk about farming to their tenants. They soon found that Mr. Cobden knew much more about agriculture than they did themselves. In every instance they were fairly beaten by him on their own ground.

It is one thing to possess information; it is another to use it. Mr. Cobden had a greater capacity of using his facts than any man of his time. It is a commonplace to say that his speeches were perspicuous; but they were perspicuous because they teemed with the right facts in

the right places. Mr. Morley has told us, on the authority of "many scores of Conservatives and Liberals," that persuasiveness was the secret of Mr. Cobden's oratorical success. It is with some hesitation that we dissent from the conclusion of many scores of authorities, but we think that persuasion is a wrong epithet to apply to Mr. Cobden's power. Persuasion (says Johnson) seems rather applicable to the passions, and argument to the reason. It was the striking characteristic of Mr. Cobden that he almost uniformly appealed to the reason and not to the passions. He did not persuade men; he convinced them.

It was Mr. Cobden's lot to do the chief work of his life by speech and not by pen; and his speeches will perhaps be read when his writings are forgotten. Yet it may be doubted whether nature intended him for a speaker. He was deficient in the imagination which is essential in the orator. Almost the last words which he uttered in public were, "I never perorate"; and he not only abstained from peroration, he never indulged in the higher flights of eloquence. It would be untrue of him to say, as Macaulay said of Sir James Mackintosh, that he spoke essays: but it is true that his speeches are deficient in some of the qualities which we have been taught to expect in oratory. No such defect can be found in his best writings. They have all the vigour, the clearness, and the fulness of his speeches, and a purity of style which is their own. And so, though his chief work was done by his tongue, we are inclined to conclude that his pen was his more powerful instrument.

Extent of information, clearness of intellect, and facility of expression are gifts which are enjoyed by comparatively few persons. Mr. Cobden did not unite to them the still rarer capacity of forecasting the political future. Like most men who pursue a great object with entire singleness of purpose, he saw that object and that only. He was

almost always misled by his sanguine temperament. He declared in 1832 "that if he were stripped naked and turned into Lancashire with only his experience for a capital, he would still make a large fortune." It is a melancholy commentary on this confident estimate of his own powers that his failure in business and subsequent investments cost him three fortunes. He was incapable of believing that any "swan" of his conception could turn into a "goose." The same fatal self-confidence which induced him to buy building land at Manchester, on which for years no one wished to build, or to purchase Illinois Railway shares before the Illinois Railway became a prosperous concern, followed him into public life. He was never tired of predicting how the repeal of Protection in this country would be followed by the adoption of Free Trade in all countries. His sanguine anticipations were a source of strength to him at the time. His audiences believed him. But they have seriously, though unjustly, hampered the cause of Free Trade since. Protectionists have been able to show that Mr. Cobden's predictions have not been fulfilled, and they invite us to reject him as a false prophet. They fail to see that his incapacity to forecast the future does not affect the validity of his reasoning.

It was a graver defect in Mr. Cobden's character that he was almost uniformly unjust to the men with whom he happened to disagree. Special causes, for which the Minister was himself responsible, partly accounted for the antipathy which he felt towards Sir Robert Peel up to 1846. Even at the close of 1845 he exulted in the fall of the Minister, and declared that he should forfeit his self-respect if he ever exchanged a word with that man in private. The provocation which Sir Robert Peel had given to Mr. Cobden in 1843, grave as it was, hardly justified such continuous rancour. The same thing may

be said of Mr. Cobden's continuous opposition to Lord Palmerston. We agree with Mr. Cobden in thinking that Lord Palmerston carried the principle of intervention to a mischievous extreme; but when we find Mr. Cobden writing of the Minister as "a venerable political sinner" and a "venerable political impostor," we instinctively recollect the many great services which Lord Palmerston performed, and recoil against the expressions.

The same disposition to misjudge men is evident in Mr. Cobden's estimates of foreign statesmen. Prince Metternich is "more subtle than profound;" Count Nesselrode, like Prince Metternich, is "an adept at finesse," not "a man of genius;" M. Guizot, "an intellectual pedant and a moral prude;" Louis Philippe, "a clever actor;" M. Thiers, "a lively little man without dignity and with nothing to impress you with a sense of power." In 1846 "the young Napoleon is evidently a weak fellow, but mild and amiable." We wonder whether Mr. Cobden, when he was negotiating with Napoleon III. in 1859, recalled the judgment which he had hastily formed thirteen years before.

The work of Mr. Cobden's life, however, was not affected by these drawbacks in his character, and he will be chiefly recollected hereafter for what he did and not for what he thought. The work which he either attempted or accomplished is divisible into two portions: First, he sought to alter, and partly succeeded in modifying, the foreign policy of England; and, secondly, he popularised and extended Free Trade. He aimed, in foreign policy, to keep his country from intervention, and to supersede war by arbitration. But Mr. Morley has justly said that "it is impossible to state the principle of non-intervention in rational and statesmanlike terms, if it is, under all circumstances and without any qualification or limit, to preclude an armed protest against intervention by other foreign Powers." Even Mr. Cobden himself, it may be

suspected, doubted the universal applicability of the creed which he was continually preaching. He actually complained that Lord Palmerston had not protested against Russian intervention in Hungary in 1850. When he read Mr. Motley's "Dutch Republic," he said he felt "almost ashamed of old Queen Bess," and the "unvarnished selfishness" of her policy. "So far am I from wishing we should be unarmed," he wrote in 1860, "I would, if necessary, spend one hundred millions sterling to maintain an irresistible superiority over France at sea." Only one legitimate inference can be drawn from such language as this. Armament and intervention are at once reduced by it from questions of principle to questions of expediency and degree. If Mr. Cobden would have helped the Dutch in the sixteenth century, and have raised a protest in the cause of Hungary in the nineteenth century, he was quite right in desiring to maintain British superiority at sea, but quite wrong in regarding intervention as a wicked and detestable policy. No doubt, he could show that in particular instances, in Spain, in Portugal, in Italy, and in Greece, Lord Palmerston had intervened without any sufficient justification. But this does not show that intervention is wrong; it only proves that Lord Palmerston was meddlesome; and, with this limitation, we find ourselves agreeing with Mr. Cobden and not with Lord Palmerston.

A proposal, which Mr. Cobden made originally in 1849, for the reference of international disputes to arbitration, will suggest to most people very similar reflections. Arbitration, as a matter of fact, was no new expedient. It had been adopted, before Mr. Cobden reached his teens, to settle a disputed frontier with the United States. It was again adopted, after Mr. Cobden's death, to settle another dispute with America. Arbitration failed in the first of these instances, because the arbitrator exceeded

his literal instructions, and, in consequence, the Americans refused to accept his award. It succeeded in the *Alabama* question, because the English Government was resolved loyally to carry out the arrangement to which it had agreed. Most people will, however, conclude from a careful review of the two transactions, and of the other rare cases in which a similar course has been taken, that arbitration, however applicable it may be to certain disputes, can never prove an effectual remedy in all international controversies. In the vast majority of cases there would be exceeding difficulty in selecting an impartial arbitrator: in almost every case there would be no means whatever of enforcing the arbitrator's award. While human nature remains unchanged, we fear that any court which has no power to enforce its decisions is unlikely to prove an efficient tribunal. Thus arbitration, though it may be useful enough in some disputes, will never prove universally applicable. It is an expedient for occasional adoption, not a specific for universal use.

It is, however, with Free Trade, and not with foreign policy, that Mr. Cobden's name will be permanently identified. In this cause he rendered two very signal services to his country. We, indeed, are not prepared to regard the French Treaty of 1860 as an achievement properly comparable with the repeal of the Corn Laws. The last Lord Grey, it seems to us, was perfectly right in contending that Free Traders ought to busy themselves with amending their own tariffs, without concerning themselves with the affairs of other nations. Such was undoubtedly the view of Mr. Cobden himself up to 1846; and the suggestion of commercial treaties was, at that time, left to men like Mr. Disraeli, the uncompromising advocate of Protection. It was the failure of Mr. Cobden's predictions which, in reality, led to the treaty of 1860; and as Free Trade in France could not be secured by a "logical

orderly, methodical process," Louis Napoleon had a right —we are expressing Mr. Cobden's opinion—to cheat the majority of his Senate into an honest policy. We are not now concerned with discussing whether Mr. Cobden was wrong in this conclusion. Most statesmen are agreed in thinking him right. But we decline to place the French Treaty in the same category as the repeal of the Corn Laws, or even to believe that its signature was attended with all the advantages which most people imagine.

In fact, the great principle on which Free Trade proceeds is opposed to arrangements of this character. The Free Trader makes it his object to remove every import duty which has been directly imposed, or which indirectly serves as a protection to any industry. He affords the consumer the opportunity of purchasing the commodities which he requires in the cheapest market. He alleges that the consumer can only pay for these commodities either by exporting other produce, or by doing work, such as carrying goods at sea for foreign customers, or out of the interest due to him on capital which he has lent to the foreigner. The increase of a nation's imports must, therefore, be attended by an increase of its exports, an increase of its carrying trade, or an increased employment of its capital abroad, or by some or all of these conditions: and it is a much wiser thing for the nation to leave each capitalist to determine whether he will invest his money abroad, or in ships, or in factories at home, than to persuade him to invest it in factories by negotiating treaties for securing a market for their produce.

If, however, it is desirable that the consumer should have the opportunity of purchasing every commodity in the cheapest market, it is essential that he should be able to obtain his food as cheaply as possible. The vice of the old system was that, in good years, the farmers produced more corn than they could sell, while in bad years they

produced too little for the people. In consequence, the food of the poor fell and rose in price almost with every rise and fall of the barometer; in the four years ending 1842, wheat stood at an average price of £3 4s. 7d. a quarter; in the four years ending 1846, it fell to an average price of £2 11s. 6d. a quarter. With one solitary exception, when the outbreak of the Crimean War in reality gave an indirect Protection to agriculture, wheat has in no one year reached the average price at which it stood from 1838 to 1842; the people of this country have never since experienced the suffering which they passed through in those four years.

In our own time, the principles which Free Traders enforced have again been challenged: and, before closing this essay, therefore, it may be worth while to describe very briefly what Free Trade did for the population of this country. From 1815 to 1842 the financial policy of the country was based on Protection; from 1842 to 1869 it was founded on Free Trade. The same degree of Protection was not, indeed, accorded to our agriculturists and manufacturers during the whole of the first period: on the contrary, it varied with the varying necessities of the time, and the opinions and dispositions of different Ministers. In the same way complete liberty of trade did not exist throughout the whole of the second period. For it practically took some twenty-seven years to strike off all the fetters with which previous generations had shackled commerce. But there is no doubt that, while from 1815 to 1842 every Finance Minister was a Protectionist, or convinced of the necessity of a certain measure of Protection, from 1842 to 1869 every Finance Minister was a Free Trader, and anxious to secure increasing liberty for trade. Here, then, are two periods of equal length, in one of which Protection, while in the other Free Trade, was the leading principle of our

financiers. It must consequently be possible to show from statistics the salient consequences of the two systems. First, as to our trade. In 1815 our exports exceeded £51,600,000 in value; in 1842 they had fallen to less than £47,400,000: in 1869 they had risen to £189,000,000. The value of our exports does not constitute an accurate test of the volume of our trade, since the "official values" remained constant during a period in which prices were falling. But, as prices fell during both periods, the figures are sufficient for our present purpose. They show that while, under twenty-seven years of Protection, the official value of our exports decreased by about 9 per cent., under twenty-seven years of Free Trade they increased fourfold.

Next as to wages. It is not easy to collect accurate statistics of the wages of labour. But it appears from the accounts which were kept at Greenwich Hospital that the wages of carpenters and bricklayers fell from an average of 31s. 8d. to an average of 28s. 8d. between 1815 and 1836; and the wages in other trades declined in the same proportion. It is certain, therefore, that the rate of wages did not improve between 1815 and 1842. According to Sir Robert Giffen, from the forties to the seventies agricultural wages increased 60 per cent., and the working classes generally in the seventies were earning from 50 to 100 per cent. more wages and working 20 per cent. less time. Under twenty-seven years of Protection the rate of wages had declined; under twenty-seven years of Free Trade it had rapidly increased.

The statistics of pauperism confirm the impression which the improvement in the wage-rate makes. In 1842, one person in every eleven, in 1869 only one person out of every twenty-two, was a pauper. After twenty-seven years of Protection pauperism stood at the highest point which it has ever reached; after twenty-seven years of Free Trade, relatively to the population its pressure had de-

creased by one half. We are far from contending that this vast improvement in the condition of the people is solely due to cheap food. But, just as we think that Free Trade has been the chief cause of our expanded commerce, so we believe that cheap food has been the main cause of the greater prosperity of the people.

While, however, it is not denied that the period of Free Trade was coincident with an expansion of our trade and a rise in the rate of wages, it is sometimes contended that the improvement to which these facts point was not due to Free Trade, but to other causes. The remarkable series of inventions which effected a revolution in industry, and the application of steam to locomotion, were, it is asserted, the causes of increased prosperity. But if the prosperity was due to the construction of railways, it ought to have commenced earlier than it actually began. For, in 1842, 1,800 miles of railways had already been constructed in the United Kingdom, and their construction had produced no effect on the condition of the people. It is, moreover, to say the least, doubtful whether our railways could have been constructed with the rapidity with which they were made if it had not been for Free Trade. In the twenty-seven years from 1842 to 1869 the country spent £460,000,000, or nearly £20,000,000 a year, on the construction of railways. Where did these millions come from? Writing in 1844, the *Economist* calculated that the duties on corn and the differential duties on sugar and other commodities imposed a burden of at least £18,000,000 a year on the consumer. It is, therefore, a fact that the removal of these duties placed at the disposal of the nation almost the precise sum which was invested in the construction of railways. Even then, if it can be shown that the increased prosperity of the nation was due to railways and not to Free Trade, it may fairly be replied that, but for Free Trade, the millions

which were invested in railways might not have been forthcoming.[1]

Free Trade gave us cheap raw materials, cheap manufactured articles, and cheap food. The last of these great boons a grateful people will always associate with Mr. Cobden's name. He was not the first worker in the field. He was not the only orator who converted a people. Mr. Villiers, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Bright, and a host of others took their part in the fray, and it would be ungrateful to forget the services which they rendered. But it was Mr. Cobden who made the chief impression on the nation, because he succeeded in placing his arguments before the people in a manner which they could understand. As Sir Robert Peel said, "The name which ought to be associated with" Free Trade in corn "is the name of one who, acting from pure and disinterested motives, has, with untiring energy, made appeals to our reason, and has enforced those appeals with an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned: the name which ought to be chiefly associated with the success of those measures is the name of RICHARD COBDEN."

[1] I have incorporated in the preceding paragraphs the substance of an argument contained in a lecture on Free Trade which I delivered in 1904 under the auspices of the Cobden Club.

MR. DISRAELI

HAS the time come when it may be possible to pronounce an impartial opinion on the character and career of the remarkable man whose speeches and whose works are now before us? We are not ignorant of the difficulty of doing so. Lord Beaconsfield was so fond of wrapping himself in a cloak of almost impenetrable mystery that it is no easy matter to trace the progress of his opinions. The passions which raged around him during his last administration were so boisterous that the critic who reviews his policy is disturbed by the echoes of the storm. But, on the other hand, unusually ample materials are at the disposal of any one who undertakes the task. While Lord Beaconsfield was still alive a political opponent attacked his policy by writing his life; a political adherent published a rival biography, which perhaps Lord Beaconsfield may have thought as damaging as the attack; and a foreign critic gave us a "study" of the statesman. Soon after Lord Beaconsfield's death his publishers issued a Hughenden edition of his novels and his tales. An anonymous editor, extracting some hundreds of passages or sentences from the statesman's writings and speeches, published them under the title of the Earl of Beaconsfield's "Wit and Wisdom;" while, finally, Mr. Kebbel, selecting some of the best or most characteristic speeches which Lord Beaconsfield made, gave us two volumes of his "Selected Speeches." If a man's thoughts and opinions

be reflected in his speeches and writings, the complete material for a portrait is before us. Some future biographer may give it shape and distinctness, but he will hardly be able to make any essential addition to the matter.

The numerous speeches, indeed, which Mr. Kebbel has selected represent only a few of those which Lord Beaconsfield actually delivered. But the principle on which Mr. Kebbel has obviously made his choice renders this circumstance of little moment. He has wisely chosen speeches from every portion of Lord Beaconsfield's career, and representing every phase of his opinions. His two volumes, therefore, enable us to a great extent to trace the progress of Lord Beaconsfield's views for the half-century which they almost exactly cover.

One word of caution, however, is necessary. The reader who addresses himself to the study of Lord Beaconsfield's speeches must not expect a statesmanlike exposition of either domestic or foreign policy. All men have their characteristics. Lord Beaconsfield was always happier in criticising an opponent's policy than in explaining his own; his best and most successful speeches are critical, his happiest passages are usually criticisms, not of measures, but of men. Perhaps no great orator ever lived whose sarcasms and whose epigrams carried a sharper sting. Occasionally his sneers read as if they were inspired by virtuous indignation. Thus he speaks of Lord Brougham "spouting in pot-houses," of Sir Robert Peel as the "burglar of others' intellect," of Mr. Gladstone as "a penurious prodigal." Thus, again, he told Lord Halifax that "petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective;" and thus he declared at Manchester that Mr. Gladstone had "avowedly formed" his first administration "on a principle of violence." But we think that he was still happier when the sneer did not carry with it the

slightest trace of ill-humour. What can be better than his description of Mr. Horsman as "a superior person;" or of Mr. Beresford Hope's rich and grotesque rhetoric; or his quiet sneer at Lord Salisbury: "There is great vigour in his invective, and no want of vindictiveness; I admit that now speaking as a critic, and perhaps not an impartial one, I must say it wants finish"? Who does not recollect his description of his political opponents?— "As I sat opposite the Treasury bench, the Ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous; there are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea."

Mr. Kebbel's pages sparkle with such passages as these. But Lord Beaconsfield occasionally soared to higher flights of oratory, and proved his capacity to be not merely bitter and sarcastic, but eloquent and impressive. It would be possible to quote several passages to illustrate our meaning; we will content ourselves with citing three. The first is a short reference to the death of Lord George Bentinck:—

"At a time when everything that is occurring vindicates his prescience and demands his energy, we have no longer his sagacity to guide or his courage to sustain us. In the midst of the parliamentary strife, that plume can soar no more round which we loved to rally. But *he* has *left us the legacy of heroes, the memory of his great name and the inspiration of his great example.*" [1]

[1] The words which we have placed in italics are inserted as a motto on the title-page of "Lord George Bentinck: a Political Biography." Yet, writing to Lord Malmesbury in 1849, Mr. Disraeli described Lord George as "a wrong-headed man." Lord Malmesbury or his editors have struck the paragraph in which this remarkable phrase occurs out of the later editions of "Memoirs of an ex-Minister."

The second refers to the conduct of the Ministry in the financial crisis of 1847–48 :—

"I scarcely know to what to compare their conduct, except to something that occurs in a delightful city of the South, with which honourable gentlemen are familiar—and which is now, I believe, blockaded or bullied by the English fleet. There an annual ceremony takes place when the whole population are found in a state of the greatest alarm and sorrow. A procession moves through the streets in which the blood of a saint is carried in a consecrated vase. The people throng around the vase, and there is a great pressure—as there was in London at the time to which I was alluding. This pressure in time becomes a panic—just as it did in London. It is curious that in both cases the cause is the same: it is a cause of congealed circulation. Just at the moment when unutterable gloom overspreads the population, when nothing but despair and consternation prevail, the Chancellor of the Exchequer—I beg pardon—the Archbishop of Tarento announces the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the issue of a Government letter: in both instances a wholesome state of currency returns, the people resume their gaiety and cheerfulness, the panic and the pressure disappear, everybody returns to music and macaroni—as in London everybody returned to business; and in both cases the remedy is equally efficient and equally a hoax."

The third passage is from a speech at the Manchester Athenæum :—

"Knowledge is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch's dream. Its base rests on the primæval earth, its crest is lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean; while the great authors who for traditionary ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale,

and maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven." [1]

We could easily multiply such passages as these if our space enabled us to do so. We have probably written enough to show that the reader who cares either for wit and sarcasm, or for "graceful rhetoric" and pure English, may find an ample banquet in Mr. Kebbel's pages; but it may be doubted whether the feast which Mr. Kebbel has prepared will attract as many guests as it deserves. Just as Lord Beaconsfield lived in mystery, so there was something mysterious in his influence. If he affected to be serious, the public frequently paid no attention to him; if he wrote a romance, the public analysed the meaning of every word in it. It has never been thought worth while to republish his only political treatise, the "Vindication of the English Constitution." His excellent biography of Lord George Bentinck sold by tens, while his more popular novels were bought by thousands. And the public showed some discrimination in this respect. For it is not wholly unjust to say that, if you care for romance, you may find it in Lord Beaconsfield's speeches and serious works; but that, if you wish to know his opinions, you must study his romances.

The popularity which Lord Beaconsfield's novels have obtained is of course partly due to the reputation of their author. If he had never done anything but write romances, he might have encountered the fate which awaits most authors of fiction. His romances, indeed, have the same charm as his speeches. They sparkle with epigram; but epigram alone cannot redeem their extravagance. His characters are too often caricatures; there is usually no mean between the depth of vice and the height of virtue; and

[1] A lady—a great personal friend of Mr. Disraeli—asked him to write in her album a passage from one of his best speeches, and Mr. Disraeli wrote out the passage cited in the text.

the hero, when he escapes from profligacy and the gaming-table, immediately achieves distinction in the Senate. In real life, of course, such cases do not occur. The majority of people are eminent neither as sinners nor senators, and the really successful artist sketches examples, and not monsters of society. The really successful artist, moreover, shrinks from the vulgarity—we use the word with regret—which distinguishes Lord Beaconsfield's novels. An admiration of wealth and rank offends us in his pages; whilst it is hardly an exaggeration to say that in some of his romances the chief agents of civilisation are jewellers, tailors, and cooks; the chief objects of existence ortolans and pearls.[1]

Extravagance of this character would have doomed most romances to the butter-shop. Lord Beaconsfield's novels have survived this fate because their exaggerations have been redeemed by more interesting matter. They found readers in the first instance because of the ill-natured or witty things which their author had to say of the persons who were best known in society. Baroness Engel, in "Contarini Fleming," only said of "Manstein" what every one had said of "Vivian Grey": "Oh! you must get it directly. The oddest book that ever was written. We are all in it!" But this reason, which made the novels popular in the first instance, has long ceased to exercise much influence. The majority of Lord Beaconsfield's readers do not care to know that Monmouth is Lord Hertford, that Rigby is Mr. Croker, or that Foaming Fudge is Lord Brougham; but they have found a new

[1] The same characteristics may be traced in his excellent letters to his sister, who probably understood, and discounted, his humorous exaggeration. Take, for example, the following: "I live solely on snipes and ride a good deal" ("Lord Beaconsfield's Correspondence with His Sister," p. 23). "Last Saturday a dinner by the Chancellor to Lord Abinger and the Barons of the Exchequer. There were also George Dawson, myself, Praed, young Gladstone, Sir M. Shee, Sir J. Beresford, and Pemberton: rather dull, but we had a swan, very white and tender, and stuffed with truffles. The best company there" (Ibid., p. 30).

reason for reading the books, because they all recognise Lord Beaconsfield himself in his principal characters. Whether he speak as Vivian Grey, as Egremont, as Coningsby, as Fakredeen, or as Endymion, the public believes it is listening to Lord Beaconsfield. Even those who know that the late Lord Strangford sat for Coningsby persist that, in reading "Coningsby," they are reading Lord Beaconsfield's own views : Coningsby, in fact, is only Vivian Grey reared in wealth, and educated at a public school. The hands may be the hands of Strangford, but the voice is the voice of Disraeli.[1]

"Vivian Grey," the first of the novels, was published in 1825–26, anonymously. "I have been reading 'Vivian Grey,'" so wrote the late Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill. "It must be written by Theodore Hook. It is very much like 'Sayings and Doings'—the same disgusting heartlessness and cant about principle. I never read a book which gave me so thoroughly the idea that the author was a clever ruffian." We are not prepared to endorse this harsh criticism without some qualification. "Books written by boys"—such were Lord Beaconsfield's own words—"which pretend to give a picture of manners and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must necessarily be founded on affectation." We accept the apology and refrain from censure. But the public does something more than refrain from censure. In the years which immediately succeeded Lord Beaconsfield's death it was buying six copies of "Vivian Grey" for every four which it bought of "Lothair," and for every three which it bought of "Sybil." Yet, as a

[1] Lord Beaconsfield was probably unconscious of the exactness of the portrait. "If you mean that Manstein is a picture of myself"—so he makes Contarini Fleming say—"I can assure you solemnly that I never less thought of myself than when I drew it. I thought it was an ideal character." Perhaps Christiana's answer is equally well worth quoting : "It is that very circumstance that occasions the resemblance for you, Contarini, whatever you may appear in this room, you are an ideal character."

work of art, "Vivian Grey" is inferior to "Lothair," and immeasurably inferior to "Sybil," perhaps the most perfect of its author's productions. In the Hughenden edition "Vivian Grey" occupies 487 pages. The first 160 pages to the death of Cleveland are excellent; the next 100 pages to the death of Violet Fane are readable; the remaining 220 pages are absurd. "Vivian Grey" owes its popularity to the picture of the hero in the first 160 pages. "Power!" says Vivian Grey, "oh, what sleepless nights! what days of hot anxiety! what exertions of mind and body! what travel! what hatred! what fierce encounters! what dangers of all possible kinds would I not endure with a joyous spirit to gain it!" He persuades Lord Carabas to enter into an intrigue for the overthrow of the Ministry. Boy as he is, Vivian Grey is the soul of the intrigue—"a young adventurer," as Mrs. Lorraine calls him, "a being ruling all things by the power of his own genius, and reckless of all consequences save his own prosperity." And this is the description of the hero whom Lord Beaconsfield's admirers persist in identifying with Lord Beaconsfield himself.

"Vivian Grey" was followed in 1829 by the "Young Duke." The second novel has none of the autobiographical interest which attaches to the first. There is a story that Mr. Isaac Disraeli said: "The 'Young Duke.' What does my son know of Dukes? He never saw a Duke in his life." The prototype of the Young Duke is George IV. He builds Hauteville House in London, rebuilds Hauteville Castle in the country, and erects an Alhambra in Regent's Park with a prodigality which was only emulated by his Sovereign in Buckingham Palace, at Windsor, and at Brighton. The King's favourite architect, Mr. Nash, was not more reckless than the Young Duke's architect, Sir Carte Blanche. The chief interest, however, which attaches to the Young Duke is connected with an article

upon it in the *Westminster Review.* This Review, which had been only lately established, declared that the author of "Vivian Grey" ranked in the third degree in the lacquey school of literature. "Let it not be said," so it added, "that, in exhibiting the absurdities and vulgar pretensions and blunders of this book, we are breaking a butterfly on the wheel. This is no butterfly : it is a bug—an unwholesome production." We only quote this abuse, which is almost as extravagant as the novel which it condemns, because it explains a passage in "Contarini Fleming." The hero of the romance finds his novel reviewed in the great critical journal of Northern Europe. "With what horror, with what blank despair, with what supreme, appalling astonishment, did I find myself, for the first time in my life, the subject of the most reckless, the most malignant, and the most odious ridicule. . . . I felt that sickness of heart that we experience in our first serious escapade. I was ridiculous. It was time to die."

Lord Beaconsfield, however, was not to die. The review, on the contrary, exercised a salutary influence on his fortunes. A second edition of the "Young Duke" was not required for years; but, when it did appear, some of the most extravagant passages were quietly struck out of it. In particular, the fulsome flattery of George IV.—"O George the magnificent and the great! for hast thou not rivalled the splendour of Lorenzo and the grandeur of Louis? Smile on the praises of one who is loyal, although not a poet laureate, and who is sincere though he sips no sack"—was omitted from the novel. But we may infer from "Contarini Fleming" that the attack of the *Westminster Review* had also another effect on Lord Beaconsfield's fortunes. Contarini Fleming, like Vivian Grey, is Mr. Disraeli. Both heroes are equally reckless, unscrupulous, and ambitious. But, while Vivian Grey contemplates nothing but political

distinction, Contarini Fleming is always hesitating between literature and affairs. We infer from "Vivian Grey" that in 1825–26 Mr. Disraeli was bent upon devoting himself to politics; we conclude from "Contarini Fleming" that during the next five years Mr. Disraeli constantly hesitated between politics and literature.

While he was still hesitating, the *Westminster Review* made him ridiculous. An author who thought it time to die had not much inclination to write. "Contarini Fleming," moreover, was even less successful than the "Young Duke." The one had been ridiculed; the other, worse fate, was hardly noticed. Mr. Disraeli, nettled by ridicule and failure, flung up novel-writing for the time and threw himself into politics. His father was residing at Bradenham in Buckinghamshire. A casual vacancy in the representation of the little borough of High Wycombe occurred in the summer of 1832. Mr. Disraeli offered himself to the electors. He was again a candidate for their votes at the general elections of 1832 and 1834. Mr. Kebbel has extracted from a local newspaper a short abstract of Mr. Disraeli's speech on the first of these occasions. He has given us a detailed report of his speeches at the two subsequent elections. These reports and numerous passages in his novels and writings enable us to understand exactly Mr. Disraeli's opinions at this period.

The leading idea which Mr. Disraeli had formed was that the Whigs had gradually modified the English Constitution. Except during a few unimportant intervals they had held power for a hundred years after 1688; and, during the century, they had turned the King of England into a Venetian Doge, and "by the establishment of the Cabinet had obtained in a great degree the executive power of the State." Such had been the results of the Revolution which Mr. Disraeli (so lately as 1845) called

"the Dutch invasion of 1688." During the period, indeed, three great men withstood the Whig or "Venetian party." The first, Bolingbroke, was impeached. The second, Shelburne, whom Mr. Disraeli regarded as "the ablest and most accomplished Minister of the eighteenth century," was unable to effect much against the dominant faction. But at last, "encouraged by the example of a popular monarch in George III. and a democratic Minister in Mr. Pitt, the nation elevated to power the Tory or National party of England." Unfortunately, "the unparalleled and confounding emergencies of his latter years" forced Mr. Pitt to relinquish Toryism. The "arch-mediocrity" who succeeded to power in 1812 did not merely inherit, he exaggerated and caricatured, Mr. Pitt's errors. "Like all weak men," he and his colleagues "had recourse to what they called strong measures. They determined to put down the multitude. They thought they were imitating Mr. Pitt because they mistook disorganisation for sedition." At one time the reconstruction of the Cabinet promised to introduce a happier era. But the reconstructed Ministry failed to effect "a complete settlement of Ireland," to conclude "a satisfactory reconstruction of the third estate," and to adjust "the rights and properties of our national industries." Their failure to do so introduced "a new principle and power into our Constitution—agitation." The Tory Ministry fell; and the Whig, or Venetian party, after a long exclusion from office, resumed the government.

The Whigs adopted their former tactics. In the eighteenth century they had kept themselves in power by passing a Septennial Act; in the nineteenth century they passed a Reform Act. According to Mr. Disraeli's view of history, the House of Commons had previously consisted of the representatives of the squires, or smaller landlords. The Whigs transferred the power of the

squires to 300,000 electors, whom they chose to call the people. Having thus secured their own authority, they threatened an attack on the Church (in Ireland); on the old municipalities; and on the Poor Law. Mr. Disraeli defended the Church because its plunder in Tudor times had enriched the great families who were the pride of the Venetian party—"a factitious aristocracy," as he styled them, "ever fearful that they might be called upon to regorge their sacrilegious spoil." He defended the old municipalities because they reflected the unreformed Parliament which the Whigs had destroyed. He upheld the Poor Laws as a relic of the old feudal system. Thus both for what they had done and for what they proposed to do, the Whigs were detestable to Mr. Disraeli.

We have endeavoured to give, as nearly as possible in Mr. Disraeli's own words, an exact account of his earlier opinions. During the next forty-nine years his policy in other respects constantly varied, but he never altered his desire to increase the authority of the Crown, and to restore the power of the squires. Passage after passage could easily be quoted from his speeches in proof of his strange wish to confine the government of England to the owners of real estate. "I take the only broad and only safe line," so he said in 1843, "namely, that what we ought to uphold is, the preponderance of the landed interest." "I repeat," so he said in 1846, "we should give a preponderance, for that is the proper and constitutional word, to the agricultural branch; and the reason is, because in England we have a territorial constitution;" and the land, which was to retain this preponderance, was to be held only by a small minority of great landlords. In objecting to the succession duties, in 1853, Mr. Disraeli said, "They are unsound in principle as regards personal property, but they are much more unsound in principle as regards landed property, because they lead to partition,

which, in my opinion, is a very great evil, and much to be deprecated."

Unluckily for Mr. Disraeli, the Reform Act had destroyed the preponderance which he desired to secure. But Mr. Disraeli thought that it would be possible to restore to the land the power which had been taken from it by giving the franchise to the lower orders. The squires were the natural leaders of the people, who, as Mr. Disraeli put it, were "proud of their old families, and fond of their old laws." The fact was clear enough to other persons as well as to Mr. Disraeli. "You, gentlemen of England," said Mr. Cobden, in the House of Commons, "the high aristocracy of England, your forefathers led my forefathers; you may lead us again if you choose." But the gentlemen of England could never regain their natural position in the State till they reconsidered their old views of policy. "Your power was never got," such were Mr. Cobden's words, "and you will not keep it, by obstructing the spirit of the age in which you live." "Infatuated mortals," said Mr. Carlyle to the landlords at the same time, "into what questions are you driving every thinking man in England?" Your class "will have to find duties, and do them, or else it must and will cease to be seen on the face of this planet, which is a Working one, not an Idle one." Mr. Disraeli's teaching was similar: "I believe that there are burdens, heavy burdens, on the land; but the land has great honours, and he who has great honours must have great burdens." Mr. Disraeli desired to rouse the landlords to a sense of their duties, and then appeal in their behalf from the ten-pound householders to the nation. "I do not believe," so he wrote in the "Vindication of the Constitution," "that the House of Commons is the House of the people, or that the members of the House of Commons are the representatives of the people." "My Lord," so he wrote on a later page, "the Whigs invoke the people: let us appeal to the nation."

It is remarkable that this policy, which proposed the combination of the landlords and the people against the middle classes and the Whigs, was first unfolded in the pages of a novel. Contarini Fleming tells the ambassadors of the Great Powers that, as they refuse to guarantee his master's throne, "His Majesty must have recourse to a popular appeal. We have no fear about the result. We are prepared for it; His Majesty will acquire a new, and, if possible, a stronger title to the Crown. . . . You will be the direct cause of a decided democratic demonstration in the election of a king by the people alone." The power of the landlords of England, like the throne of Scandinavia, was to be secured by popular support; and the adherence of the populace was to be obtained by a wholesale offer of Reform. Mr. Disraeli had no fear of reforms, provided they were not offered by the Whigs. "The very name of tithes" in Ireland was to be "abolished for ever"; "that flagrant scandal" a Church rate "must be removed"; economy must be rigidly enforced; the votes of the farmers must be secured by the reduction of the malt tax; and the votes of town householders by a repeal of the window tax; above all, the people must rid themselves of "all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory, and unite in forming a great national party which can alone save the country from impending destruction."

Even this programme, however, was not sufficient. The Whigs were supported by a large majority of ten-pound householders, and there was no apparent necessity for a dissolution for seven years. Mr. Disraeli recollected that the Septennial Act had been passed by the Whigs. He consequently advocated the restoration of triennial Parliaments. He thought that the ten-pound householders dared not vote against the party which had given them the franchise: he consequently demanded the protection of the ballot.

Such were Mr. Disraeli's opinions when he stood for Wycombe. His support of economy and reform gained for him testimonials from Radicals like Mr. Hume, and Repealers like Mr. O'Connell. So soon, however, as they discovered that he was courting Tory support, the Radicals regarded him with suspicion. Mr. Hume withdrew his testimonial; the electors of Wycombe declared that he was an impostor; and Mr. Greville, hearing that he was wavering between Chandos, an extreme Tory, and Durham, the most Radical member of the Grey Ministry, declared that he must be "a mighty impartial personage." Mr. Disraeli suffered three defeats, but he was not daunted by his ill-success; on the contrary, he had the courage to compare himself to "the famous Italian general who, being asked in his old age why he was always victorious, replied it was because he had always been beaten in youth." In the following April he became a candidate for Taunton, opposing Mr. Labouchere, who had just accepted office in Lord Melbourne's second Ministry. At Taunton he formally abandoned the demand for the ballot and triennial Parliaments. He boldly declared that he had only advocated them for the sake of breaking the strength of the Whigs. But "the mighty Whig party" had already fallen to pieces, and the expedients of 1832 were no longer necessary. In other words, Mr. Disraeli had advocated the ballot and triennial Parliaments, not because he thought these measures in themselves desirable, but because he wished to eject the Whigs from power.

This alteration was not the only change which Mr. Disraeli had made in his political opinions. At Wycombe, in December, 1834, he had declared that tithes should be abolished in Ireland; and that "the Protestant Establishment should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves." At Taunton, in April, 1835, he professed that "he could not understand the principle by which the

Whigs would reform the Church of Ireland. It appears to me that they have offered a premium to the Whiteboys to destroy the Protestants." At Wycombe, in June, 1832, he had placarded the town with a testimonial which he had received from O'Connell. At Taunton, in April, 1835, he proclaimed Mr. O'Connell a traitor and incendiary. In March, 1835, he had written a letter to the Secretary of the Westminster Reform Club, forwarding his subscription and requesting the withdrawal of his name. At Taunton, in the following month, he had the assurance to declare that he had never heard of the club. Mr. Disraeli was never at a loss for an excuse of this kind. Perhaps, as he said of the newspapers in "Lothair," that is why he was popular—"the taste of the age being so decidedly for fiction."

A change of policy did not serve Mr. Disraeli. The electors of Taunton, like the electors of Wycombe, would have nothing to do with him. In the same year in which he stood for Taunton, Mr. Disraeli addressed to Lord Lyndhurst the remarkable treatise which he called the "Vindication of the Constitution"; he followed up the treatise in 1836 with a series of letters signed "Runnymede," which were published in the *Times*. It is difficult to conceive a greater contrast than is afforded between the treatise and the letters. The former, as befits a constitutional discussion addressed to an ex-Lord Chancellor, is grave in its manner, decent in its language, and tolerably free from personalities. The "Runnymede" letters, on the contrary, are full of personal abuse. Mr. O'Connell, for instance, is a "systematic liar and a beggarly cheat, a swindler, and a poltroon. He has committed every crime that does not require courage." Mr. Spring Rice is told that he is to be entrusted with the care of beings who, "in their accomplishments and indefatigableness, alike in their physical and moral qualities,

not a little resemble you—the industrious fleas." The three Secretaries of State are described as "one odious, another contemptible, the third both." Lord John Russell, the first of the three, is told, "Your feeble intellect having failed in literature, your strong ambition took refuge in politics." And again, "Your aim is to reduce everything to your own mean level, to degrade everything to your malignant standard." Lord Palmerston, the second of the three, is the Minister who maintains himself in power in spite of the contempt of a whole nation. Lord Glenelg, the third, is addressed in softer language: "Slumber on without a pang, most vigilant of secretaries. I will stuff you a fresh pillow with your unanswered letters, and ensure you a certain lullaby by reading to you one of your own despatches." We could easily multiply extracts of this character. We abstain from doing so because there is little pleasure in digging out of the files of an old newspaper[1] the scurrilous personalities which Mr. Disraeli condescended to use in 1836.

In one respect the "Runnymede" letters stood Mr. Disraeli in good stead. They introduced him to the *Times*, and the *Times* frequently defended its old contributor when its support was of importance to him. The time was, in fact, arriving when the support of the leading newspaper of the day was essential to Mr. Disraeli. In 1837 he published "Henrietta Temple" and "Venetia," and at the general election which followed the Queen's accession he became member for Maidstone. His colleague in the representation of the borough, Mr. Wyndham Lewis died in March, 1838. In the following year Mr. Disraeli married Mr. Lewis's relict. Mrs. Disraeli had not much resemblance to the Violet Fane of "Vivian Grey" or the Alcesté of "Contarini Fleming"; but she brought Mr.

[1] These extracts are all taken from the *Times* itself. The letters were carefully "edited" before they were published in book form.

Disraeli means at a time when he was "a little wearied of what Fakredeen called the choice excitement of pecuniary embarrassment;" and she clung to her husband throughout her life with a belief that was never shattered. In dedicating to her "Sybil," Mr. Disraeli called her "the most severe of critics, but a perfect wife." She might fairly have answered that he made her the best and most constant of husbands.

Mr. Disraeli sat for Maidstone for four years. Every one has heard of his first speech. Any one who cares to read the report of his failure will find it buried—by an odd arrangement—in the middle of Mr. Kebbel's second volume. Instead of repeating a story which has been told and retold till we are weary of it, we wish to dwell very shortly on one striking circumstance in Mr. Disraeli's early Parliamentary career. We have a tolerably intimate acquaintance with the twenty volumes of Hansard which contain the history of the Parliament of 1837, and we have always regarded with astonishment the evidence which they afford that Mr. Disraeli paid little or no attention to his Parliamentary work. His name is constantly, perhaps usually, absent from division lists, and he seems to have come down to the House occasionally to make a speech, but generally to have neglected his ordinary duties. Mr. Kebbel's volumes give us no assistance in analysing his opinions during this period. Those who turn from Mr. Kebbel to Hansard will probably be surprised at the early Parliamentary conduct of the late leader of the Tory party. In 1838 Mr. Disraeli was in minorities of 13 and 17—the majorities in each case exceeding 300—on motions to repeal the new Poor Law. In 1839, in the company, it is fair to add, of Mr. Gladstone, he resisted the introduction into prisons of religious ministers other than those of the Church of England. In the same year he was in a minority of only three against the proposal of the Govern-

ment to establish a police force in Birmingham, which had been the scene of a memorable Chartist riot ; [1] and he even resisted a measure which the Government introduced for permitting the formation of a county constabulary. In 1840 he was in a minority of five on a motion for the free pardon of Frost, Williams, and Jones, who had been convicted of high treason after the Newport rising. In 1841 he moved the rejection of the Bill for continuing the Poor Law for ten years. In 1839, we ought to add, Mr. Disraeli spoke on the Chartist petition ; but he omitted to express the "immortal truths," which he afterwards in "Sybil" ascribed to Egremont on the same occasion. Poor Sybil, who wept over Egremont's speech, would, we fear, have been disappointed if she had read the genuine document in Hansard.

Throughout the whole Parliament Mr. Disraeli retained his hatred of the Whig party, which had been the distinguishing feature of his earlier political career. "The aristocracy and the labouring population formed the nation," so he declared in 1841. "It was only when gross misconception and factious misrepresentation prevailed that a miserable minority, under the specious designation of popular advocates, was able to pervert the nation's order." He still regarded Peel as the only statesman capable of terminating Whig rule. He had called him, in the "Runnymede" letters in 1836, "the only hope of a suffering people." He said of him in 1841 : "Placed in an age of rapid civilisation and rapid transition, he had adapted the character of his measures to the condition of the times. When in power he had never proposed a change which he did not carry ; and when in opposition he never forgot that he was at the head of the Conservative party."

[1] The late Lord Panmure, then Mr. Fox Maule, said of Mr. Disraeli's vote on this occasion, that "he seemed to be the advocate of riot and confusion." (Hansard, xlix. 734.)

At the general election in 1841 Mr. Disraeli was elected for Shrewsbury. The six years during which the Parliament of 1841 lasted formed, in one sense, the most brilliant period of his life. During these six years the Young England party was formed by his influence, and dissolved by his conduct. The principles by which the party was guided were explained in a "trilogy"—"Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred." In "Coningsby" the hero of the novel describes the dangers which beset the State. Two centuries of Parliamentary monarchy had made government detested; two centuries of Parliamentary Church had made religion disbelieved. "The only way to terminate class legislation is not to entrust power to classes. . . . The only power that has no class sympathy is the Sovereign." The public mind should be accustomed "to the contemplation of an existing though torpid power in the Constitution capable of removing our social grievances, were we to transfer to it those prerogatives which the Parliament has gradually usurped. . . . The proper leader of the people is the individual who sits upon the throne. . . . Let us propose to our consideration a free monarchy established on fundamental laws, itself the apex of a vast pile of municipal and local government, ruling an educated people represented by a free and intellectual press." The objects at which a new Government was to aim were elaborated a year afterwards in "Sybil." In "Sybil" the whole social system is out of joint. Rich and poor are divided into two nations, "between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy." "As the power of the Crown has diminished, the privileges of the people have disappeared, till at length the sceptre has become a pageant, and its subject has degenerated into a serf." Thus the moral of "Sybil" is the same as the moral of "Coningsby"; and the author of both novels plainly implies that national and social progress must

be secured by the restoration of personal government to the Crown.

It was not likely that a politician animated by such views as these would prove a steady adherent of any political party. Throughout the whole of 1842 and a great part of 1843, however, Mr. Disraeli constantly supported Sir Robert Peel's Administration. But in August, 1843, he suddenly adopted different tactics. On two occasions he spoke against the Government; and, according to Lord Sandon, heaped "the grossest terms of contumely and opprobrium upon it." In 1844 he adopted the same conduct, reproaching the Ministry for asking the House of Commons to reverse its deliberate vote. He said: "It seems that the right honourable baronet's horror of slavery extends to every place except the benches behind him. There the gang is still assembled, and there the thong of the whip still sounds." "I shall not feel," so he concluded, "that I have weakened my claims upon the confidence of my constituents by changing my vote within forty-eight hours at the menace of a Minister." The House, which recollected the flattering terms in which in other years Mr. Disraeli had spoken of the Prime Minister, was bewildered by this language; and a member declared that "the Shrewsbury clock had certainly been disappointed at not being the clock at the Admiralty"; and so it had become "irregular, no longer chiming in with the right honourable baronet."[1]

[1] The *Morning Herald* had made a similar charge against Mr. Disraeli in 1843, and Sir Robert Peel himself in 1845, nettled at the incessant attacks, declared in the House of Commons that, if Mr. Disraeli, in 1841, entertained the opinions which he professed in 1845, it was a little surprising that he should have been prepared to give the Minister his confidence, and to accept office under him. Mr. Disraeli roundly declared in reply that he had never directly or indirectly solicited office, and that it was totally foreign to his nature to make any application for place. But, in publishing the Peel correspondence, Mr. Parker has printed three letters: (1) from Mr. Disraeli of

Mr. Disraeli found many opportunities in 1845 of renewing these attacks. Twice in February he denounced the Government for issuing warrants to open letters passing through the Post Office. In the second of these speeches he used the famous expression, "the right honourable gentleman caught the Whigs bathing and walked away with their clothes." In March, on a proposal of Mr. Miles for relieving the agricultural interest, "the beauty which everybody wooed, and one deluded," he declared that "Protection appears to be in about the same condition that Protestantism was in 1828. . . . For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative Government is an organised hypocrisy."

In April, on the motion of the Government for increasing the Maynooth grant, he said:—

"Something has risen up in this country as fatal in the political world as it has been in the landed world of Ireland —we have a great Parliamentary middleman. It is well known what a middleman is: he is a man who bamboozles one party, and plunders the other, till, having obtained a position to which he is not entitled, he cries out, 'Let us have no party questions, but fixity of tenure.'"

September 5, 1841, not merely applying or office, but concluding, "I confess to be unrecognised at this moment by you appears to me to be overwhelming, and I appeal to your own heart . . . to save me from an intolerable humiliation"; (2) a letter from Mrs. Disraeli, of the same date, reminding the Minister of her husband's exertions and of her own sacrifices in the Conservative cause; and (3) a letter from Sir James Graham of December 21, 1843, stating that Mr. Disraeli had applied for a place for his brother. Mr. Disraeli had a convenient, or inconvenient, memory, which led him to reproduce, in his speeches and in his writings, passages from other men. But it seems that, if he occasionally remembered what he had better have forgotten, he sometimes forgot what it was his duty to remember.

The attack upon the Maynooth grant was the first advance which Mr. Disraeli made towards the country gentlemen, who were clamouring against Peel. Extreme Protestants believed that a proposal to quadruple the grant to a Roman Catholic university was equivalent to endowing "the priests of Baal at the altars of Jezebel." It is impossible to suppose that Mr. Disraeli shared either their prejudices or their fears. Passage after passage could be quoted from his works to show that he was free from all sectarian feeling. There are reasons, moreover, for thinking that Rome exercised the fascination over him which it has for so many minds. In the "Young Duke," May Dacre is a Roman Catholic; Contarini Fleming becomes a convert to Rome; Ferdinand Armine is a Roman Catholic; Sybil is a Roman Catholic; and Lothair is only saved from being a Roman Catholic by the dying injunctions of Theodora. It is a fair deduction that Mr. Disraeli regarded Rome with no unreasoning suspicion. More than twenty years afterwards, moreover, as Prime Minister, he allowed Lord Mayo, as Irish Secretary, to propose a scheme for the establishment of a new Roman Catholic university, with officers and professors paid by Parliament. If he were sincere in 1845, what must be thought of this proposal in 1868? If, on the contrary, he were sincere in 1868, what must be thought of his arguments in 1845? There can be no doubt of the opinion of his immediate friends. Mr. Kebbel admits that Mr. Disraeli's speech on Maynooth broke up the Young England party.

The speeches of 1845, however, probably effected all that Mr. Disraeli intended. They raised him to the highest rank of Parliamentary debaters. The *Times* wrote: "Philip lives in Demosthenes, Antony in Cicero, and Peel will alternately amuse and exasperate political tyros in the pages of Disraeli." Sir Robert Peel, indeed, affected indifference to these attacks. It was impossible

for him to be really indifferent to Mr. Disraeli's invective. It was evident that the country gentlemen, though they still shrank themselves from attacking the distinguished statesman to whom they paid a nominal allegiance, listened to Mr. Disraeli with pleasure. They cheered sentiments in his mouth which they would have themselves been ashamed to utter. As M. Guizot put it: "Peu de Torys, même parmi les plus mécontents, auraient tenu, sur le plus illustre d'entre eux, un si insultant langage; mais beaucoup prenaient plaisir à l'écouter."

The session of 1845 had made Mr. Disraeli eminent as a debater; the session of 1846 made him the most powerful member of the Protectionist party. Country gentlemen, already discontented with Sir Robert Peel, broke into open mutiny when he announced his determination to repeal the Corn Laws. But the country gentlemen were sheep without a shepherd; an army without a leader. The chiefs of their party were the Ministers who were proposing a policy odious to themselves; and Protection, which had been the guiding principle of statesmen for two centuries, had apparently no advocate. The way was open for a new man, and Mr. Disraeli at once came forward. It might, indeed, have been thought that he was the last member of the Tory party who ought to have undertaken the defence of Protection. In 1827 he had ridiculed the Corn Laws in "Popanilla." In Vraibleusia—the scene of that delightful romance—it was the common law of the land that the islanders should purchase their corn only of the Aboriginal; and when the Vraibleusians, who "paid for their corn nearly its weight in gold," complained, the Aboriginal satisfactorily proved to them that his income was the foundation of their profits. No one who reads "Popanilla" can doubt that Mr. Disraeli was opposed to Protection in 1827. But we are not dependent on "books written by boys" for his views. In 1842 he defended the

first Budget of Sir Robert Peel, and vindicated the right of the Tory party to deal with Free Trade, insisting that Sir Robert Peel was only giving effect, as Mr. Wallace and Mr. Huskisson had given effect before him, to "principles which originated with Mr. Pitt." It is true that in 1843 he altered his tone, defined Free Trade as Reciprocity, and defended the Corn Laws as an outwork to the landed interest. We may make some observations on his attitude in 1843 later on. But in 1845 he reverted to his original position, and described the Revolution as a "memorable epoch, that had presented England at the same time with a Corn Law and a public debt." The sneer is consistent enough with the account of the Aboriginal in "Popanilla"; it is inconsistent with its author's conduct in 1846.

"The truth is, gentlemen," said Mr. Disraeli in 1834, "a statesman is the creature of his age, the child of circumstances." Circumstances made it convenient for Mr. Disraeli to support the Budget of 1842, and circumstances made it convenient for him to oppose its corollary, the Budget of 1846. We readily admit the ability which he displayed throughout the contest which ensued. He sounded the original attack: he bore the brunt of the struggle; he planned the concluding catastrophe. Whatever merit may be due to a statesman who struggled to maintain a Corn Law in the midst of a famine, that—it cannot be denied—is due to Mr. Disraeli.

Great as were Mr. Disraeli's exertions during this memorable session, his position at the close of it was still doubtful. Some persons imagined that, as the defeat of the Ministry had been secured by a combination of Whigs and Protectionists, the victors should coalesce in a new Administration. Mr. Disraeli had prepared the way for a coalition by a change in his language. His opinion of Lord John Russell was modified with every alteration in his feelings towards Sir Robert Peel. In 1834 Lord John

had been turned from "a tenth-rate author into a first-rate politician," on the principle that "bad wine produces good vinegar."[1] In 1844 he is "sagacious and bold in council; as an administrator he is prompt and indefatigable. . . . He is experienced in debate, quick in reply, fertile in resource." In 1845 he has "a thoughtful mind and a noble spirit." If compliments could have paved the way for a coalition, there was nothing to prevent a combination between Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Russell. The Whig Minister, however, declined to apply to the Protectionists for assistance; and Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli were, consequently, placed in a position of some embarrassment. During the remainder of the session of 1846 they sat below the gangway on the Ministerial side of the House. This arrangement, however, proved inconvenient. There was no room for both Protectionists and Whigs on the same side of the House of Commons. In consequence, in the beginning of 1847, the Protectionist leader crossed the floor and occupied the front Opposition bench. Lord George Bentinck thus became the leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Disraeli his principal lieutenant.

At the general election, which took place in 1847, Baron Rothschild was elected for the City of London. Lord John Russell, at the commencement of the session, proposed that the House should resolve itself into a Committee for the purpose of removing the disabilities of the Jews. To his infinite credit, Lord George Bentinck, who had voted for a similar motion on a previous occasion, supported the Minister. The Protectionists were, most unreasonably, dissatisfied with the course which he took; and Lord George, mortified at their disapprobation, withdrew from his prominent position as their leader. In common decency,

[1] The simile was first used in one of the Wycombe speeches. Like many of Mr. Disraeli's sayings, it was required to do double duty, and was again employed in the "Runnymede" letters.

Mr. Disraeli ought to have followed his example. He was a Jew by extraction, a Jew in feeling, a Jew—to use his own expression—who professed "the whole of the Jewish religion," and who believed "in Calvary as well as in Sinai." Like Lord George Bentinck, he had supported, both by his speech and his vote, Lord John Russell's motion; unlike Lord George, however, he could not bring himself to sacrifice his position for the sake of his opinions. He continued on the front Opposition bench, where the absence of his friend gave him fresh importance. He did more: at the close of the session he reviewed the conduct of business in a speech of exceptional power. Mr. Kebbel is authorised to state that Mr. Disraeli himself thought that this speech made him leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and in it he stooped to win a cheer from his followers by blaming the Whig Ministers for attempting to legislate for the Jews.

"Everything comes if a man will only wait," said Fakredeen in "Tancred." "Be patient!" was the advice of the Chevalier de Winter to Contarini Fleming. Mr. Disraeli had patiently waited for his opportunity; and his hour had, at last, come. The Conservatives had neither selected him, nor even openly acknowledged him as their chief; yet thenceforward, to all intents and purposes, Mr. Disraeli was their leader.

This position, however, involved a serious difficulty. The country gentlemen still longed for the restoration of Protection; and it was obvious to Mr. Disraeli that there was no chance of inducing the Parliament of 1847 to abandon Free Trade. He had, consequently, to reconcile the country gentlemen to the inevitable. He could not consent—as he magniloquently declared in 1851—that "the laws regulating the industry of a great nation should be made the shuttlecock of party strife;" and he set himself to bribe his party into this view. The land, which

had lost Protection, might be afforded fiscal relief. "Reciprocity being impossible," as Mr. Kebbel bluntly puts it, "the next best thing was to obtain compensation for the landed interest." There were two ways in which agriculturists thought they could be relieved. The malt tax might be repealed, or the direct burdens on land might be reduced. The farmers would have preferred the first of these alternatives, which, it so happened, Mr. Disraeli had himself advocated at Wycombe in 1834. Mr. Disraeli, believing that he could obtain more votes in the House of Commons for the other, persuaded them to prefer the second. In 1849 he proposed that one-half of the whole of the local rates should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund. In 1850 he suggested in the same spirit that local charges, exceeding £2,000,000 a year, should be borne by the Imperial revenue; and in 1851 he again drew attention to the unjust charges which weighed upon the landed interest. In 1852 he had himself the opportunity, as a Minister, of proving the sincerity of his advice and the consistency of his opinions. He had impressed on the agriculturists for three successive years that, if Protection were not restored, they were at least entitled to relief from their rates. In introducing his first Budget in April, 1852, he practically flung over one alternative by explaining in detail the successful results which had followed Free Trade in timber and sugar. In December, 1852, he abandoned the other alternative, and instead of relieving the land by reducing the rates, actually proposed to reduce the malt duty and to double the house tax. His conduct in office seemed thus almost purposely designed to rebut all the recommendations which he had made in Opposition.

One explanation of his inconsistency was, indeed, possible at the time. It might have been said of him in 1852 that he had never been either a Protectionist or a

Free Trader, but that he had always been in favour of Reciprocity. In 1843 he had advocated the conclusion of commercial treaties, and had even gone so far as to declare that "the principle of commercial treaties was the only one that could be adopted in the complicated state of our relations." In the same year he had used similar language in a speech to his constituents. "My idea of Free Trade is this—that you cannot have Free Trade unless the person you deal with is as liberal as yourself." He denied in 1846 that it was possible to "fight hostile tariffs with free imports"; and he urged in 1849 the frank adoption of Reciprocity as "the fundamental principle of a commercial code." So far it was obvious that Mr. Disraeli was the consistent advocate of Reciprocity; and it was not then so plain as it is now that Reciprocity was a mere synonym for Protection. In December, 1852, however, there was not even a reference to "the fundamental principle"; and the reduction of import duties was defended on the ground that it had been attended with consequences salutary to the consumer. Twenty-seven years afterwards, a supporter of Lord Beaconsfield who had not been "educated" beyond the opinions of 1849 did him the disservice of quoting his old arguments; and Lord Beaconsfield swept them away as "rusty phrases" used "forty years ago."

What, then, was Mr. Disraeli's real opinion on commercial matters? "I acquit the Chancellor of the Exchequer," said Mr. Sidney Herbert in 1852, "of the charge of having ever been a Protectionist. I never for one moment thought he believed in the least degree in Protection." Mr. Disraeli's earlier writings and his later speeches justify Mr. Sidney Herbert's allegation; and we are forced to conclude that Mr. Disraeli began and ended his career as a Free Trader; and that ambition made him a Protectionist in 1846.

Such, in the course of a long life, were the contradictory opinions which Mr. Disraeli expressed on commercial matters. We must now revert, though happily we shall require less detail, to Mr. Disraeli's general policy. Little real interest attaches to his career as a Minister in 1852, in 1858, and in 1867. On each of these occasions he was the leader of a minority. A government in a minority cannot always do what it desires. As Mr. Disraeli himself once said, "The temper of one leader has to be watched; the indication of the opinion of another has to be observed; the disposition of a third has to be suited; so that a measure is so altered, re-moulded, re-modelled, patched, cobbled, painted, veneered, and varnished, that at last no trace is left of the original scope and scheme." This passage, spoken in 1848, does not unfairly describe the difficulties of the Conservative Administrations of 1852, of 1858, and of 1866. Mr. Disraeli himself said in 1862 that the Ministry of 1852 "was formed for the sole purpose of establishing a militia throughout this country, founded on a popular principle." It was eminently characteristic of him that he should define the object of a Ministry by quoting its single successful achievement. In 1852, however, he was much more anxious to win a victory over the Whigs than to form a popular militia. He even condescended to apply to the Manchester party for assistance. "He asked one of the leaders to call upon him. 'Protection,' he said to the illustrious Free Trader" (we are quoting Mr. Morley's "Life of Cobden"), "'is done with. That quarrel is at an end. If you turn us out, you will only have the Whigs in; and what have the Whigs done for you? They will never do anything for you.'" If Mr. Greville is right, Mr. Disraeli, on the same occasion, endeavoured to secure the support of the Irish Brigade. We own that we should like to know whether Lord Derby or any other member of the Cabinet was a party

to the negotiation with the Free Traders. Lord Derby refused to countenance the "engagement" with the Irish.

Up to 1852 Mr. Disraeli's course was chiefly influenced by commercial matters. Organic or constitutional questions rose into importance afterwards. The leaders of the Conservative party approached the subject of Parliamentary Reform under great advantages. Lord Derby had been a member of the Government which had carried the first Reform Act. Mr. Disraeli had always declared that the settlement of 1832 had not gone far enough. "I wish it" (the House of Commons) "were even more Catholic, though certainly not more Papist," was his decisive declaration in the "Vindication of the Constitution." On Reform Mr. Disraeli had no "rusty phrases" to explain away. Notwithstanding this advantage, however, he managed to involve himself in fresh inconsistencies. The principal objection which he had always raised to the settlement of 1832 was that it had confined the franchise to a faction—the ten-pound householders. He even talked of "the dreary monotony of the settlement of 1832" as lately as 1867. But in 1858 the Reform Bill which he introduced was founded on the doctrine that the objectionable franchise hitherto confined to boroughs should be extended to counties, and England thenceforward was to be governed by ten-pounders. In 1865 he still clung to this idea. "All that has occurred, all that I have observed, all the results of my reflections lead me to this more and more—that the principle upon which the constituencies of this country should be increased is one not of radical, but, I would say, of lateral Reform—the extension of the franchise, not its degradation;" and he went on to avow that his present opinion was opposed to any modification of the ten-pound franchise. But in the beginning of 1867 he brought forward a measure, the leading feature of which was the institution

of household suffrage in boroughs. It is true that this radical extension of the franchise was accompanied with securities which reconciled the Conservatives to it. But the securities and fancy franchises were flung away one after another, and household suffrage was left, almost alone, in its naked beauty. After all these changes of front, we are not surprised at finding the first Reform Act at last acknowledged as "a statesmanlike measure." If we could be surprised at anything, we should feel astonishment that the man who had first condemned the dreary monotony of a ten-pound franchise, who had afterwards proposed to extend the same franchise to counties, who in 1865 had declaimed against the degradation of the franchise, and who in 1867 had himself degraded the franchise, should have had the presumption to declare that he "had to prepare the mind of the country and to educate" his party.

The passing of the Reform Act of 1867 prepared the way for fresh legislation. Mr. Gladstone commenced the attack, which was the distinguishing feature of his first Administration, on the three branches of the Irish upas-tree. Mr. Disraeli was forced into fresh inconsistencies in consequence. So long before as 1832 he had declared that the very name of tithes in Ireland must be abolished for ever; in 1843 he had included among Irish grievances "the tenure of land," and "the claims of the rival Churches." In 1844 he had declared that in Ireland there was "a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church;" and in a memorable chapter in "Coningsby" he had made the Young England party eager for a dissolution of the alliance between Church and State. There can, therefore, be very little doubt that the policy which Mr. Gladstone pursued in 1869 would not have encountered Mr. Disraeli's opposition in 1844. But in 1869 Mr. Gladstone's measure was "a

recognition of the principles of Socialism;" and his policy, "rash in its conception, in its execution arrogant," received the stout opposition of Mr. Disraeli.

We pass from his course on the Irish Church to the policy which he pursued on the Land Question. In 1843 he had distinctly indicated "the tenure of land" as one of the grievances of the Irish people. In 1852, the Government of which he was a member introduced four Bills to deal with the Irish land question. Three of them were passed. The fourth, after many years, was ultimately passed, "with the omission," which we will describe in Mr. Disraeli's own words, "of what I consider to be a vital clause in the Bill of 1852—namely, that which gave compensation to the tenant for improvements, and retrospective compensation." The Minister who had made such proposals could not be a very formidable opponent of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Act; and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Disraeli supported its second reading, though he naturally indicated several details in which he desired to see it amended in Committee. Ten years afterwards, in 1880, he put the case very fairly: "Though there were many provisions in the Act of 1870 which we disapproved, the general policy of that Act was in harmony with the policy which we had always supported;" and again, 'I am not prepared to say at the present moment that there is any portion of the Act of 1870 which I would wish now to be altered."

It is clear, then, that Mr. Disraeli approved the principle of the Irish Land Act, and that he did not wish any portion of it altered. Yet he made the passage of this Act, for which he had himself voted, and which he approved, a reason for denouncing Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. "It is the first instance in my knowledge of a British administration being avowedly formed on a principle of violence." "You remember when you were informed

that the policy to secure the prosperity of Ireland was a policy of sacrilege and confiscation." The Ministry's "specific was to despoil churches and plunder landlords." Plunder, with Mr. Disraeli, always suggested blunder. Years before he had described in "Coningsby" a noble lord who "plundered and blundered in the good old time." In 1873 he recollected his old epigram, and in the Bath letter declared, that "the country has, I think, made up its mind to close the career of plundering and blundering."

Hard words of this kind are happily rare in political warfare; and public men have usually too much decency to accuse their opponents of the practices of highwaymen. We object, on our part, to the substitution of abuse for argument. But if men will import hard words into political warfare, we would venture to point out that the only distinction between the practices of the two parties is that, while the Whigs "plunder" a class for the sake of the community, the Tories plunder the community for the sake of a class.

Whether, however, Mr. Disraeli's accusations were just or not, his opinion was well founded. The country was tired of Mr. Gladstone's heroic legislation, and gave Mr. Disraeli a majority. In the new Parliament, Lords and Commons were both ready to register his decrees; but Mr. Disraeli attempted little or no legislation. We are not going to blame him for doing nothing. The country at the general election demanded rest; it had no right to blame the Minister who gave it repose. Before he had been two years in office, moreover, political quiet was disturbed by embarrassments abroad, and foreign policy became the question of the day.

Mr. Disraeli's foreign policy had one merit. He was a consistent supporter of the French alliance. In a singular passage in "Sybil," Lord Shelburne is said to have adopted "the Bolingbroke system: a real royalty,

in lieu of the chief magistracy; a permanent alliance with France, instead of the Whig scheme of viewing in that Power the natural enemy of England; and, above all, a plan of commercial freedom." The passage is historically inaccurate, but it is interesting because Mr. Disraeli supported the French alliance throughout his career. No doubt the early acquaintance which he enjoyed with the third Napoleon greatly influenced his opinions on this point. Endymion could hardly be jealous of Florestan. But this circumstance ought not to detract from the merits of his policy. We do not forget that Mr. Disraeli in 1853 declared that "a cordial understanding with the French nation should be the corner-stone of our diplomatic system and the key-note of our foreign policy;" and that in 1860 he did his best to allay the panic fear of France which Lord Palmerston had unfortunately stimulated.

A consistency in supporting the French alliance was however, only one feature in Mr. Disraeli's foreign policy. Throughout his career he displayed the love of Imperialism which was the distinguishing feature of his last Ministry. The land of England, so he said in 1851, "has achieved the union of those two qualities for combining which a Roman emperor was deified, Imperium et libertas." "One of the greatest of Romans," he repeated in 1879, "when asked what were his politics, replied, 'Imperium et libertas.' That would not make a bad programme for a British Minister."[1] A minister in a minority, however, has few opportunities of displaying his true opinions, and in 1852 and in 1858 Mr. Disraeli was a minister of peace.

[1] It may be doubted whether Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism rested on a much firmer basis than an epigram. In "Endymion" he has described the Eglinton tournament, and the two victors in it are two foreigners, the Count of Ferroll and Prince Florestan. And he wrote to Lord Malmesbury in 1852: "These wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years and are a millstone round our necks" ("Memoirs of an Ex-Minister," p. 262).

In 1867 the events which led to the Abyssinian War enabled Mr. Disraeli, for the first time, to use the language of a War Minister, and he showed his natural disposition by speaking of the successful campaign in language which might have been addressed to a Hannibal or a Napoleon. Lord Napier had "led the elephants of Asia, bearing the artillery of Europe, over passes which might have startled the trapper and appalled the hunter of the Alps." He had taken a fortress which "would have been impregnable to the whole world had it been defended by the man by whom it was assailed." "The standard of St. George was hoisted on the mountains of Rasselas." Men smiled at the time at this bombast. It derives a fresh interest now from the light which it throws on its author's character. The man who had talked of "Imperium et libertas" in 1851, and whose champion had hoisted the standard of St. George on the mountains of Rasselas in 1867, was the Minister who made the Queen an Empress in 1876.

Eastern empire, moreover, had a peculiar fascination for Mr. Disraeli. "Let the Queen of the English," so he made Fakredeen say in "Tancred," "transfer the seat of the Empire from London to Delhi. . . . We will acknowledge the Empress of India as our suzerain." It is certainly remarkable that the man who wrote this sentence should have made the Queen an Empress. We cannot wonder that the event should have drawn fresh attention to the novel, and that the sale of "Tancred" should have been doubled, as we understand it was, during the Eastern complications of 1876 to 1878. But the visions of Eastern empire, in which Mr. Disraeli indulged, concentrated his attention on the road to India. "The Eastern question," to quote "Tancred" again, "is who shall govern the Mediterranean." Lord Palmerston had settled the matter in his own way in 1840, and his policy, culminating in the fall of Acre, was "an exploit beyond the happiest achievement of the

elder Pitt." Mr. Disraeli aimed at the same object in 1875 by his purchase of the Suez Canal shares. He undoubtedly thought that, if England had an increased interest in Egypt, she would strengthen her hold on the Mediterranean, and on the road to her Eastern Empire.

While, however, Mr. Disraeli was buying canal shares and irritating his supporters by bestowing a brand-new title on his Sovereign, events were occurring in Eastern Europe which were disarranging his plans. The inhabitants of Herzegovina were rising against the Porte; Servia and Montenegro were actively supporting the insurgents; Russia was contributing both money and arms to the belligerents, and Bulgaria was agitated by distant prospects of freedom. There was apparently every reason for fearing that these events might lead to a fresh war between Russia and the Porte, and that Russia, in consequence, might make fresh advances towards the Bosphorus and the Mediterranean. Neither the Suez Canal shares nor the Queen's Imperial diadem proved adequate obstacles in the hour of danger to the Russian advance. But Mr. Disraeli could probably have obtained effectual means for resisting Russia from the people of this country. There was a general feeling in 1876 that the sacrifices which England had made during the Crimean War should not be rendered useless, and there was general irritation at the manner in which one of the conditions on which peace had been made in 1856 had been abandoned in 1870. The people of this country, therefore, required very little encouragement to induce them to support the Turk. The Porte, however, sacrificed the English alliance by the brutal outrages with which its officers crushed out the first symptoms of insurrection in Bulgaria, and Mr. Disraeli offended the people by the light-hearted manner in which he spoke of brutalities which had shocked a nation. Sympathy with an oppressed nationality, indeed, could

not be expected in Mr. Disraeli. "When I hear of the infamous partition of Poland," he said in 1847, "although as an Englishman I regret a political event which, I think, was injurious to our country, I have no sympathy with the race which was partitioned." German nationality he declared in 1848 to be "dreamy and dangerous nonsense." A statesman who could speak in this way of the rising cause of nationalities was not likely to feel much sympathy for the Christian subjects of the Porte. When, however, the news of the Bulgarian atrocities reached England, it was still open to him to utter a few words of horror; instead of doing so, Mr. Disraeli rejected the story, and, recollecting some of his old epigrams, chose to talk of it as "coffee-house babble."[1] The phrase was resented by the people, and had almost as much effect as Mr. Gladstone's eloquence in dissuading Englishmen from actively espousing the cause of Turkey.

We, of course, have no reason to be dissatisfied with a circumstance which compelled the Cabinet to preserve the neutrality which Lord Derby, as Foreign Minister, preferred. A prime minister, however, forced into a policy of neutrality against his will, was not likely to maintain his consistency. While the Cabinet was in favour of peace, Lord Beaconsfield—for Mr. Disraeli was now a peer —was talking about the capacity of England to enter on a second and a third campaign. His words were warlike, his action was pacific. At the commencement of 1878, however, this inconsistency was temporarily removed. The Cabinet, alarmed at the approach of Russia towards Constantinople, asked Parliament for a vote of £6,000,000. This, the first step towards war, caused the resignation of Lord Carnarvon. A fortnight afterwards a second step towards war was taken, and the British fleet steamed up

[1] The phrase "a coffee-house tale" is in "Tancred;" the "babble of clubs" is in "Sybil."

the Dardanelles. Three weeks later the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, and the Government insisted that all the articles should be referred to the consideration of Europe. The refusal of Russia to consent to this arrangement led, at the beginning of April, to two fresh decisions. An order for calling out the reserves was issued on April 1st; and on April 17th the Indian Government received orders to despatch troops to Malta. These decisions led to the resignation of Lord Derby.

It is necessary to restate these facts because our judgment of Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy partly depends on them. The reserves were called out, and the Indian troops were despatched to Malta, after the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, and war was risked to enforce the demand, which the Government had made, that every article in the San Stefano Treaty should be referred to a European Congress. From Lord Beaconsfield's point of view much, no doubt, could be said in favour of this demand. It was a perfectly intelligible policy to declare that arrangements made by Europe should only be altered with the consent of Europe. The determination of the Government ultimately prevailed, and on June 3rd Russia accepted the Conference on the conditions on which Lord Beaconsfield had insisted. On the very next day the convention was signed at Constantinople between England and the Porte which placed the Turkish frontier in Asia under the protection of this country, and which surrendered Cyprus as a place of arms for British occupation. It is not now our intention to dwell on the reckless folly of a guarantee which, if it had proved operative, would have been certainly intolerable, or on the extravagance of an arrangement which placed an island under our rule which we did not require, and which has proved an inconvenient burden. Perhaps its occupation, like that of the barren rock in "Popanilla," illustrated the "Colonial System." We are

endeavouring to examine the policy from Lord Beaconsfield's own standpoint, and from this point of view we can see no excuse for it. The very statesmen who had risked war for the sake of asserting a great principle—that every arrangement, made at San Stefano, should be referred to a European Congress for consideration—were busily making similar arrangements themselves, which Europe was not asked to endorse, and which were studiously kept secret.

History, we feel satisfied, will condemn the conclusion of the Anglo-Turkish Convention. History, perhaps, may also notice the strange alteration in Lord Beaconsfield's opinions which was effected in exactly one hundred days in 1878. There is perhaps nothing more characteristic in Lord Beaconsfield's career than the contrast between his language on April 8th and on July 18, 1878. In April he complained that the Treaty of San Stefano made "the Black Sea as much a Russian lake as the Caspian"; that "the harbour of Batoum is seized by Russia"; that "all the strongholds of Armenia are seized by Russia"; and that Bessarabia, the cession of which was regarded in 1856 as of the utmost importance, since "it involved the emancipation of the Danube," was restored to Russia. At Berlin these arrangements were confirmed. Bessarabia was restored to Russia; Batoum and the Armenian strongholds were ceded to it. It was obviously necessary in July to minimise the importance of the points on which Lord Beaconsfield had descanted so eloquently in April. The Prime Minister was equal to the occasion. Bessarabia, which in April involved the emancipation of the Danube, was in July "a very small portion of territory occupied by 130,000 inhabitants." As for the Armenian fortresses, it was ludicrous to go to war for Kars. Why Russia had conquered it three times already; if we obtained its restoration, Russia in the next war would take it again. As for "the harbour of Batoum," on which such

stress had been laid in April, "let us see what is this Batoum of which you have heard so much. It will hold three considerable ships, and, if it were packed like the London Docks, it might hold six; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense." But we need hardly pursue the analysis any further. If Lord Beaconsfield were sincere in April, what must be thought of his surrender in July? If he were insincere in April, what must be thought of his conduct in risking war?

Peace, with or without honour, was, however, obtained; and a nation harassed with a sensational foreign policy anxiously expected quiet. Unfortunately, while war had been imminent, Russia had despatched a mission to Kabul; and the Ameer of Afghanistan, who had declined to receive a British envoy at his capital, "welcomed with every appearance of ostentation" the embassy from the Czar. In consequence, the British Government insisted on the Ameer's receiving a British envoy, and on his refusal to do so commenced the Afghan War. Most people now think the Ameer's refusal to receive a mission an inadequate reason for the war. We are, however, solely anxious to point out that it was the only cause alleged for it. Suddenly, however, in an after-dinner speech at the Mansion House, Lord Beaconsfield solemnly announced a new reason for it. In the opinion of the Government, the frontier of the Indian Empire was "a haphazard and not a scientific one." An aphorism in an after-dinner speech became thenceforward the basis of a policy, and the acquisition of a scientific frontier the first object of our arms.

It is, of course, impossible for us to decide whether a policy thus formulated after dinner had been deliberately adopted by the Government; but there is no evidence that a scientific frontier had occurred to the Cabinet before

the Prime Minister uttered his aphorism. Curiously enough, moreover, the policy which was initiated after dinner was opposed to the Prime Minister's original opinions. He had condemned the first Afghan War in unmeasured language; he had condemned the Government which commenced it—"those fortunate gentlemen," as he called them, "who proclaimed war without reason, and prosecuted it without responsibility." He had condemned, above all, the absurdity of a policy which aimed at the rectification of frontiers.

"What was our situation? On the west and east we had 2,000 miles of neutral territory; on the north impassable mountains; and on the south 10,000 miles of unfathomable ocean. Was it possible to conceive a more perfect barrier than that which he had described? Could a boundary be possibly desired more perfect and safe than the boundary our Empire possessed before the invasion of Afghanistan?" (Hansard, vol. lxvii. 170.)

It may, however, be thought that, in the phrase which Lord Beaconsfield used in "Lothair," and which he afterwards employed in Parliament to justify an inconsistency, "a great deal had happened" since the first Afghan War. It may, therefore, be fair to compare Lord Beaconsfield's scientific frontier speech with his views on scientific frontiers, not in 1842, but in the previous July. The great feat which he accomplished at Berlin was the provision of a scientific frontier for Turkey. But the line of the Balkans had always hitherto been defended on the northern slope, and military men had regarded Varna and Shumla and Sofia as essential to its defence. Even an ordinary layman can see that the last of these three places occupies the same position before the Balkans which Kandahar fills with reference to the Suleiman Range. But "nothing could be more erroneous"—so Lord Beaconsfield explained in July —"than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategic

position." We have no desire to resist this conclusion. We only wish to point out that the scientific frontier for Turkey and the scientific frontier for India were selected on contrary principles, both of which could not be right. In short, if Lord Beaconsfield was right in July, there was nothing to justify his epigram at the Mansion House in November; and if he were right in November, he made a very bad bargain for the Porte in July.

The whole structure, however, which Lord Beaconsfield had erected was already tottering. More than twenty years before he had himself said of Lord Palmerston:

"With no domestic policy he is obliged to divert the attention of the people from the consideration of their own affairs to the distraction of foreign politics. His external system is turbulent and aggressive that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed. Hence arise excessive expenditure, heavy taxation, and the stoppage of all social improvement. His scheme of conduct is so devoid of all political principle, that when forced to appeal to the people his only claim to their confidence is his name."

The words which Lord Beaconsfield thus applied to Lord Palmerston in 1857 form the best description of his own position in 1880. While Lord Palmerston, however, achieved success, Lord Beaconsfield encountered humiliation. We have often wondered whether, after his fall, he remembered the decisive judgment which he had recorded more than half a century before: "Mark what I say: it is truth. No Minister ever yet fell but from his own inefficiency."

We have traced in the preceding pages the development of Lord Beaconsfield's opinions. We have still one portion of our task to accomplish, and to pronounce a general opinion on his character and career. Whatever

judgment may be formed of his political conduct, no one will deny the brilliancy of his genius, or the completeness of his success. With the solitary exception of Mr. Canning he is, perhaps, the only man of genius who has been Prime Minister of this country since the death of Mr. Pitt. If his information had been as large as his genius was eminent, he would have been almost irresistible in debate. Lord Beaconsfield, however, had rather the accomplishments of a man of letters than the knowledge of a statesman, and his ignorance of political and economic science was a constant impediment to him. This deficiency, however, did not detract from the completeness of his success. Since the days of Thomas Cromwell there is nothing with which his career can be compared in this country; since the days of Alberoni there is nothing with which it can be compared on the Continent. But the most remarkable circumstance connected with Mr. Disraeli's career is that he distinctly foresaw the success which he achieved. "I have brought myself by long meditation," so he wrote in "Endymion," "to the conviction that a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and that nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment." But the opinion which he thus deliberately expressed at the conclusion of his career was certainly formed half a century before. Mr. Torrens tells us that Mr. Disraeli said to Lord Melbourne in 1832, "I want to be Prime Minister." He would have expressed his real meaning more accurately if he had said, "I intend to be Prime Minister." In the "Young Duke" he put the matter much more clearly:— "One thing is clear, that a man may speak very well in the House of Commons and fail very completely in the House of Lords. There are two distinct styles requisite: I intend, in the course of my career, if I have time, to give a specimen of both." While in another novel the future

is predicted even more plainly. "My son," says Baron Fleming to Contarini, "you will be Prime Minister."

Most young men of parts are ambitious; but they usually sacrifice their ambition to their comforts or their necessities. Mr. Disraeli, on the contrary, was prepared to abandon everything for the sake of his career. Friendship should be no obstacle. "He has no friends," said Coningsby of Sidonia; "no wise man has. What are friends? Traitors." Feeling should be no obstacle. "Grief is the agony of an instant; the indulgence of grief the blunder of a life," is Beckendorff's cynical conclusion in "Vivian Grey"; and, in strict accordance with Beckendorff's precept, Contarini Fleming looks for solace, in the "great bereavement of his life, to the love of nations and the admiration of ages." Men who are thus able to blunt their sensibilities are not, perhaps, agreeable examples of their race; but they display a firmness which deserves the success on which their heart is set. Yet more than forty years of Mr. Disraeli's life passed before the goal, which was ever before his eyes, seemed attainable. His youth had been a blunder, and remained a blunder with him to the last; his manhood was a struggle; he evidently feared that his old age would be a regret. He lived long enough to confess that the struggle of manhood had ended in triumph, and that old age had brought fresh successes. Thus instructed by experience, he rewrote his epigram. Yet, amidst the triumphs and successes of his age, he looked back with regret on the time when he had been "young and committed many follies." "The blunders of youth," he says in "Lothair," "are preferable to the triumphs of manhood or the successes of old age."

And perhaps, if Lord Beaconsfield thought over the struggles and triumphs of his own career, he may have doubted whether even his great success was worth the sacrifice which he made for it. "My conception of a great

statesman is of one who represents a great idea"—such were his words early in 1846. It is bare justice to say that, up to that time, Mr. Disraeli's conduct had on the whole been animated by some such conception. He had formed at the commencement of his career the idea of an alliance between the people and the Crown, and he had clung to it with a consistency which was creditable to his character. But, from the time at which he was brought into collision with Sir Robert Peel, he flung away his "great idea." Instead of endeavouring to promote his principle, he seized the opportunity of gratifying his ambition by assuming the lead of Protectionists and Conservatives. For the sake of obtaining this post he broke from his old friends; he sacrificed his old convictions; and he thenceforward became the chameleon of politics, changing his colours with the changing circumstances of each hour.

It may possibly be objected that in changing his opinions Mr. Disraeli only followed the example of other statesmen. What is there—so it may be asked—more inconsistent in Mr. Disraeli than in Mr. Gladstone, or in Sir Robert Peel? The answer seems to us plain. The change which took place in the opinions of these Ministers was quite as great as that which occurred in the case of Mr. Disraeli; but the development of their opinions was gradual and constant, while the changes in Mr. Disraeli's opinions were various and inconstant. We can easily understand that a Protectionist might be converted to the principles of Free Trade, or even that a Free Trader might honestly become a Protectionist; but we cannot believe that any man could have been a Free Trader in 1842, a Protectionist in 1846, and a Free Trader again in 1852. Again, we can believe that a man might be converted either to the benefits or the inconveniences of Parliamentary Reform; but we cannot believe that a man who

began his career in favour of the degradation of the franchise should have been honestly opposed to any such degradation in 1865, and honestly in favour of it in 1867. Statesmen must doubtless sometimes change their opinions; but those statesmen who change their opinions much and often lie open to the charge that their political conduct is not governed by strict or sound principles, and they sink into Opportunism.

In the previous pages we have only alluded to the chief inconsistencies in Mr. Disraeli's career: it would have been easy to increase the number of these examples. The only explanation which we can suggest for them is that Lord Beaconsfield condescended to support from time to time the policy which seemed convenient, instead of maintaining the principles which he approved. His inconsistencies, however, are not the only circumstances which detract from his political character. Statesmen will be judged hereafter by posterity in connection with the measures which they have framed and the measures which they have opposed. It will probably be then recollected that Mr. Disraeli opposed most of the measures which conferred special benefits on succeeding generations. He opposed the new Poor Law; he opposed the formation of a county police; he opposed the Education grant of 1839; he opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws; he opposed the French Treaty of 1860; he opposed the abolition of Church Rates; and he opposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Against this long category—which it would be easy to extend—of measures which Lord Beaconsfield opposed, it is difficult to discover any which he framed. The chief monuments of his constructive statesmanship seem to be the Reform Bill of 1867, and the penny stamp on bankers' cheques. Good authorities, however, we believe, allege that Mr. Disraeli's share in devising the household suffrage which was the

chief feature of the Reform Bill of 1867 might be described in the language which he himself used of Sir Robert Peel's Corn Bill:—

"After the day that the right honourable gentleman made his first exposition of his schemes, a gentleman well known to the House, and learned in all the political secrets behind the scenes, met me and said, 'Well, what do you think of your chief's plan?' Not knowing exactly what to say, but taking up a phrase which has been much used in the House, I observed, 'Well, I suppose it is a great and comprehensive plan.' 'Oh!' he replied, 'we know all about it: it was offered to us. It is not his plan: it is Popkins's plan.'"

If it be true that such words as these could have been applied to Mr. Disraeli's share in the Reform Act of 1867, his legislative achievements may be summed up in two sentences: he made the Queen an Empress; and he imposed a stamp duty on cheques.

Thus Lord Beaconsfield's name will not be recollected hereafter for many feats of constructive statesmanship. It will then be thought a still graver blot on his character that he lowered the tone of political morality. Statesmen cannot make two such speeches as Lord Beaconsfield made in April and July, 1878—the one condemning, the other defending, the same arrangements respecting Bessarabia, Armenia, and Batoum—without lowering their own character for honesty. Prime Ministers cannot make such speeches without lowering the character of their country. People, indeed, occasionally excused some of Lord Beaconsfield's utterances on the extraordinary ground that they were only Lord Beaconsfield's. They thought that, as he had been saying things for fifty years without meaning them, it was very hard to construe his sentences strictly in his old age. They forgot the distinction between the speeches of an individual and a

minister. The individual who prevaricates only damages his own character: the Minister who prevaricates damages the character of his country.

When, however, all this has been said—when the methods by which Mr. Disraeli rose to power have been condemned, and the manner in which he used his power has been criticised—justice requires that something on the other side should be added. If we examine Lord Beaconsfield's career from a personal point of view, we are struck with the completeness of his success. He achieved in his age all that the wildest dreams of his youth had imagined. If, in office, he displayed little constructive statesmanship, in opposition he developed qualities of rare excellence. In his attacks on Sir Robert Peel in his younger, or in those on Mr. Gladstone in his later years, he showed how the keenest of rapiers, in the hands of the coolest of swordsmen, could damage his adversary and sustain the courage of his own friends. But in his opposition to Lord Palmerston Mr. Disraeli rose to a still higher level: it should be remembered to his eternal honour that, in those years, he did much to correct Lord Palmerston's indiscretions. While Lord Palmerston was carried off his feet by his fear of France and of the third Napoleon, Mr. Disraeli was the consistent advocate of the French alliance; while Mr. Gladstone was somewhat recklessly declaring that Mr. Jefferson Davis had made a nation, Mr. Disraeli—in opposition to the opinion of his own friends—was carefully refraining from a single word to which any American could take exception; and finally, while Lord Palmerston was proposing fortifications which proved obsolete before they were completed, Mr. Disraeli was perpetually advocating a policy of economy. These were great services, rendered for no party objects, since the bulk of Mr. Disraeli's followers differed from their leader on each

of them, and the critic of Mr. Disraeli's career is bound to acknowledge them.

Such was Mr. Disraeli. We admire his genius, we respect his courage, and we do not grudge him his triumph. But in the presence of all his successes, we find ourselves occasionally unable to condone his conduct, and frequently compelled to condemn his policy. His career, beyond all doubt, was a personal success; but his rule was, in many respects, a political misfortune.

LORD DUFFERIN

BY an unusually happy choice Sir Alfred Lyall was selected to write the life of Lord Dufferin. Sir Alfred occupied a high position in India during the period of Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty ; he returned home, in the same year as his chief, to fill a place of still greater influence in the India Office. In India he had an opportunity of observing on the spot the manner in which Lord Dufferin discharged the duties of the highest office which, in his varied career, he was called on to fill. In England Sir Alfred has had exceptional means of acquiring a knowledge of our policy in the East, with which Lord Dufferin, in the Lebanon, at St. Petersburg, at Constantinople, and in India itself, had so much to do. But, if long and varied experience in India, and on the Indian Council, enables Sir Alfred to speak with exceptional authority on those portions of Lord Dufferin's life which made his name familiar to his contemporaries, and will ensure his remembrance by posterity, other qualifications also specially fitted him for the task. A poet of no mean order, a writer whose works are always original, a critic whose judgment is almost always sound, Sir Alfred is admirably constituted to appreciate a man who was not merely a distinguished administrator and diplomatist, but who inherited through his mother the genius of the Sheridans. A few of Sir Alfred's readers may, indeed, think that he might have devoted, with

advantage, a little more space to some passages in Lord Dufferin's life. Six or seven hundred pages are a small allowance for the biography of a man who filled so many important positions. But, in these days of diffuse biographies, we are not disposed to quarrel with a writer who has contrived to be concise without becoming obscure. Sir Alfred Lyall has been fortunate in his subject, and Lord Dufferin in his biographer.

And what a life it was which Sir Alfred Lyall has undertaken to write! Most administrators would consider themselves fortunate if they had crowned a long career by presiding over the destinies of our great autonomous colony in America, or by administering the affairs of our vast and populous dependency in India. Most diplomatists would regard themselves as equally fortunate if they had been entrusted, before their final retirement from the service, with our diplomacy at one of the great European capitals. But Lord Dufferin represented his sovereign in Canada and India, at St. Petersburg, at Constantinople, at Paris, and at Rome. No other man who lived in the nineteenth century filled so many high and important offices, or filled them with more credit to himself or with more advantage to the country.

He commenced life, no doubt, in favourable circumstances. Heir to a great estate and to a considerable name, he was introduced to official life, and was even raised to the English peerage, at an age when most men are painfully endeavouring to secure a foothold on the lower rungs of the professional or parliamentary ladder. He leapt into prominence. But he owed his advancement, not merely to accidents of birth and fortune, but to qualities which commended him to his political leaders, and made him the favourite of society. He was born at Florence on June 21, 1826. His father, Price Blackwood, a naval officer who succeeded somewhat unexpectedly to

the Irish peerage, died while his only child was a boy at Eton. His mother, Helen Sheridan—one of the three famous sisters, who became respectively Duchess of Somerset, Mrs. Norton, and Lady Dufferin—was the grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She said herself to Mr. Disraeli: "You see Georgy (the Duchess of Somerset) is the beauty; Carry (Mrs. Norton) is the wit; and I ought to be the good one, but then I am not." Her verdict on herself, however, is not likely to be shared by many people. Those who look on her portrait will think that she inherited much of the beauty with which her grandmother, Miss Linley, endowed her family; those who read her poetry or her correspondence will give her credit for the wit and genius which distinguished her grandfather; while those who read her letters to her son will think that, whether she was or was not "the good one," she was among the wisest and best of mothers. She sent her boy, in the first instance, to a private school at Hampton, removing him in due course, in May, 1839, to Eton, where she placed him with Cookesley, "a tutor who" (Sir Alfred Lyall says) "had more brains than ballast; whom his pupils liked much more than they respected him; who could make himself popular, but could not make them work." Admitting that Cookesley's eccentricities made him an unsuitable tutor for many boys, we cannot fully endorse this judgment; nor are we sure that we could not apply Sir Alfred's indictment of Cookesley to other masters who were at Eton at the same time. It is, at any rate, the case that Sir Alfred himself quotes Sir James Stephen's description of life at Eton to justify his remarks on life at Cookesley's. We think he might have recollected that an Eton pupil-room, like other institutions, is to be judged by its results, and that something, at any rate, can be said for a master whose pupil-room contained, when Lord Dufferin was at Eton,

a future Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, and was soon afterwards to admit another distinguished diplomatist, Sir E. Malet.

Blackwood's talk was so copious that Cookesley nicknamed him "the orator"—Cookesley had a nickname for most of his pupils; but his oratorical powers do not seem to have gained him admittance to the debating society, profanely known as "Pop," where many generations of boys, from the days of Mr. Gladstone downwards, have anticipated their triumphs at the Union or in the Senate. But the fact was that Lord Dufferin's temperament hardly fitted him for the distinctions at which most public-schoolboys aim. When he went up to Christ Church, one of his contemporaries said of him that he "neither hunted, nor rowed, nor played games, and his immediate friends were not many." At Oxford he seems to have pursued the somewhat detached life which he had followed at Eton. He did not seek such honours as the university confers in its schools, or the undergraduates themselves award on the cricket field or on the river. Shunning the company of the many, he surrounded himself with a few chosen friends, with some of whom he founded the Pythic Club. He justified, however, his old tutor's nickname by taking frequent part in the discussions of the club and in the debates of the Union, whose president he ultimately became.

Lord Dufferin remained at Oxford for only two years, which he afterwards remembered as "the happiest of his unmarried existence." In 1849 he accepted from Lord John Russell a Lordship-in-waiting, and in the following year was raised to the English peerage as Lord Clandeboye of Clandeboye. He resigned his Court office on the fall of Lord John's Administration in February, 1852; but he found ample means of occupying his time with the distractions of society, the duties of his estate, and the

interests of foreign travel. In 1854, after the commencement of the Crimean War, he took his yacht, the *Foam*, to the Baltic, and witnessed the siege of Bomarsund from her decks.

"When Sir Charles Napier asked him whether he had a wish to see a shot pass over him, Lord Dufferin closed with the proposal and went on board the *Penelope*, a ship that was ordered to run within range of a Russian battery, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was effectively armed. The *Penelope* not only drew the enemy's fire, but her crew were so busy watching the shots that she was not stopped before she grounded on a rock, and Lord Dufferin passed two hours in perilous exposure. . . . Not content, however, with this trial of his nerves, Lord Dufferin joined a party to visit the trenches of the French army investing Bomarsund. . . . They slipped across from battery to battery, running the gauntlet of fire in the open intervals; and finally, seeing a white flag hoisted on the fort, they walked straight up to the gate, were sharply ordered back by a Russian officer who cried to them that the place had not yet surrendered, and regained cover under a satisfactory shower of balls and bullets."

Lord Dufferin's adventure probably raised him in the opinion of his political chief, who, more than forty years before, had ridden with Lord Wellington along the lines of Torres Vedras; and, in the spring of 1855, Lord John asked his young follower to join him on his abortive mission to Vienna. Lord Dufferin thus obtained his first introduction to diplomacy and diplomatists; but he apparently omitted to place on record any of the impressions which he derived from his mission. He returned home to occupy himself with the duties of his Court office, which he had resumed under Lord Aberdeen, and with the affairs of his Irish estate, which he was never tired of improving. But attendance at Court and altera-

tions at Clandeboye could not satisfy his adventurous nature.

"Like Ulysses, Lord Dufferin could not rest from travel, and heard the call of the sea. So in June, 1856, he set off 'to sail beyond the sunset' into the Arctic north on his yacht the *Foam*, with a bronze likeness of the Duchess of Argyll, by Marochetti, as her figurehead. The story of the voyage has been brilliantly told in his 'Letters from High Latitudes,' a book which shows him in the prime of his manhood captivating the Icelandic ladies by his lively courtesy, taking frolics and fatigues with equal zest, never flinching before the deep potations of the hospitable Norsemen or among the fogs and ice-bergs which barred his access to Spitzbergen."

In the winter of 1858–59, in company with his mother—and having substituted steam for sails—he took another voyage in quieter waters, visiting Egypt, Syria, and Greece. This leisurely expedition occupied the whole of 1859; and he only reached London in the beginning of 1860. The turning-point of his life had come; he was about to hear a more serious "call" than that which had summoned him to the frozen waters of the North or the blue skies of the Mediterranean. A great duty was imposed on him, which forced him hurriedly to return to the Levant, where he had passed so much time in the preceding year.

The district of Syria lying between the mountain ranges of Lebanon, and Anti-Lebanon, and the coast, is mainly populated on the north by the Maronites, an ancient Christian sect, and on the south by the Druses, a race of Mahomedan schismatics. Each of these was placed under a local chieftain, subordinate to the Turkish Governor of Syria. Hereditary feuds had long existed between the two peoples, who hated one another as the Guelfs hated the Ghibellines, or the Montagues the Capulets. The

Turkish Government unhappily encouraged dissensions which it was its business to allay; and in April, 1860, the feud broke out in bloodshed and fire. The Druses attacked the Maronites; the Maronites retaliated on the Druses; the Turkish garrison, instead of repressing disorder, joined in the slaughter. In the course of May thirty-two villages were burned down; and Lord Dufferin himself found in Damascus "upwards of 2,000 houses utterly destroyed, and their inhabitants buried beneath their ruins."

When news of these ghastly outrages reached Western Europe they excited a thrill of horror. France has always regarded herself as the protector of the Roman Church in the Levant; and Napoleon III., much to his credit, at once proposed that the great Powers should send a joint commission to Syria, and that the commission should be followed by French troops, instructed to restore order. The proposal was received with some coldness by this country. The Emperor's Italian policy, and the proposed annexation of Savoy and Nice to France, were exciting distrust; and, though French and British soldiers were again acting together in the Far East, there was no longer any real cordiality between the two peoples and their rulers. Accounts, however, of further massacres compelled Lord Palmerston to assent to the Emperor's proposal; and Lord Dufferin was selected to represent this country on the joint commission.

If there was no real cordiality between France and England, there was some divergence between their views. The French, as the special patrons of the Maronites, were disposed to lay the entire blame of the massacre on the Druses; the English, on the contrary, as a great Mahomedan power, were inclined to regard both Druses and Maronites as equally guilty. While there was this divergence in their views, there was also a difference in

their aims. France, despatching 8,000 troops to Syria, desired that her own soldiers should win credit in restoring order. England, on the contrary, nervous of any fresh symptoms of French aggression, was anxious to secure the withdrawal of the troops on the earliest opportunity. The French desired to place the whole district under a Maronite chief; the English, or Lord Dufferin, suggested that it should be turned into an independent Viceroyalty on the Egyptian model. The compromise which was finally adopted was to place it "under a Christian governor nominated by, and directly subordinate to, the Porte, . . . unconnected with the tribes and a stranger to the province, to be appointed for three years, and to be removable only on formal proof of misconduct."

It may be possible to argue that Lord Dufferin's own proposal would have afforded a more radical and more complete remedy for Syrian disorder than the compromise which the commissioners adopted. But the latter, at any rate, succeeded; and Lord Dufferin had the satisfaction of hearing, some years afterwards, from a correspondent at Damascus that the settlement was still a success. "There is no province in Syria, none, I believe, in the Empire, so well governed as the Lebanon."

In fact, in the melancholy history of the Ottoman Empire during the last fifty years, the shadow is relieved by the single ray of light thrown upon it in 1860 and 1861. For once the Concert of Europe had been made to work; and that it was made to work was largely due to Lord Dufferin's tact, ability, and good manners. He won the confidence, not only of the wretched people whom he had come to protect, but of his fellow-commissioners whom he had so often to oppose. As his mother wrote, "His departure from Beyrout was a universal sorrow: rich and poor, merchants, sailors, and

soldiers—everybody seemed to love and look up to him; and he was tenderly kissed on both cheeks by the French general, his principal political adversary."

We have dwelt at some length on Sir Alfred Lyall's admirable account of the mission to the Lebanon,[1] because it was not merely the turning-point of Lord Dufferin's career, but in some respects was the most successful piece of work which he ever accomplished. But we must pass over more rapidly the succeeding seven or eight years of Lord Dufferin's life. During these years, indeed, he was introduced to official duties at home, having accepted the Under-Secretaryship at the India Office. During these years he lost the mother who—so he wrote himself—"was one of the sweetest, most beautiful, most accomplished, wittiest, most loving, and lovable human beings that ever walked upon the earth." During the same period he married the lady who still survives, and to whom he was able to say, in the last year of his life, "You have been everything to me in my prosperous days, and they have been many; and now you are even more to me in my adversity." But, with such exceptions, there is little to chronicle between his return from Syria and his appointment to Canada. His duties at the India Office, at the War Office—to which he was transferred in 1866—and at the Duchy of Lancaster—to which he was appointed in 1869—however largely such work may loom in the lives of other men, count for nothing in a career so full and varied as that of Lord Dufferin.

During this period, however, he was engaged in his chief political controversy. The recrudescence of rebel-

[1] Sir Alfred has had the good sense to consult, and to master, the French view of the case; and, in consequence, he writes, throughout his chapter on the Syrian mission, with an impartiality and knowledge which unhappily are not always shared by other English writers on the subject.

lion in Ireland drew new attention to Irish questions. Mr. Gladstone commenced his task of attacking the three branches of the famous upas-tree; and men like Mr. Mill and Mr. Bright formulated rival schemes for dealing with Irish land. Lord Dufferin, in 1868, entered into the lists against Mr. Mill; and perhaps the few surviving persons who have read their respective pamphlets will form the conclusion that he got the better of the contest. The part which he had taken in the controversy, and his position and experience as a great Irish landlord, naturally induced Mr. Gladstone to consult him when he was preparing the Irish Land Act of 1870; and traces of Lord Dufferin's advice may be found in the measure itself, and still more clearly in the speech with which Mr. Gladstone introduced it in the House of Commons. Yet Lord Dufferin was, in fact, radically opposed to the ideas which were inspiring Mr. Gladstone, and which were, indeed, permeating political society at that time. For, while almost every reformer on both sides of the House thought it necessary to give the Irish tenant some greater interest in his holding, Lord Dufferin was in favour of gradually abolishing the interest which custom had given to the Ulster tenantry. The legislation which Mr. Gladstone initiated in 1870, moreover, tended to create a dual ownership in land, while Lord Dufferin's whole policy was based on vesting the landlord with complete control of his own property.

In so writing we have no desire to reflect on Lord Dufferin's conduct in the management of his estates. On the contrary, from the day on which he came of age—at a period when many large Irish proprietors were unhappily neglecting their duties and living away from their property—he was impressed with a sense of his responsibilities as a great landlord. His first act, on attaining his majority, was to grant his tenants (Sir A.

Lyall says rather imprudently) an abatement of £2,000 a year of his rental for twenty-one years. He was able to say in 1870 that leases had been the ancient rule on his property, and that there was not a tenant at will on his estate. Further, with a lavish generosity worthy of the Sheridans, he spent, in twenty-five years, some £150,000 on improvements; and more than half of this sum was devoted to the benefit of his tenants, whose rental, notwithstanding, was not increased by a single sixpence. His prodigal liberality in this respect partly contributed to the embarrassments of his closing years; for it was a desire to restore the noble fortune which he had seriously impaired that induced him to undertake duties in the City for which temperament and training equally disqualified him. But, if Lord Dufferin must be regarded as a model Irish landlord, he signally failed to appreciate the real difficulties of the Irish land question. His own excellences blinded him to the misconduct of some landed proprietors; and, though he was induced to support the Act of 1870, which for the first time invested the Ulster custom with the sanction of law, he defended it "for the same reason that I would sentence the murderer of an illegitimate infant to be hanged. I do not approve of adultery; but the creature being there has the right to the protection of the law."

It is not altogether surprising to learn that ministerial silence indicated disapproval of these sentiments, or that Lord Dufferin, conscious of the difference between himself and his colleagues, thought it right to offer to retire from the Government. It is perhaps not much more surprising that, in the few years which followed the Act of 1870, he sold two-thirds of his Irish estates. He was, of course, strongly opposed to the Act of 1881.

Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had no desire to lose their brilliant lieutenant; but some of them were already

considering whether other and more suitable work could not be found for him. On Lord Mayo's assassination in 1872, the Duke of Argyll, as Secretary of State for India, evidently desired to confer the Viceroyalty upon him.[1] The Cabinet, however, preferred Lord Northbrook; but immediately afterwards decided on sending Lord Dufferin to Canada as Governor-General. The prize was undoubtedly a great one. By an Act of 1867 "the four provinces of Upper Canada, Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick had been united under the name of the Dominion of Canada." The territory of Manitoba, purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company, had been added to the Dominion in 1869: British Columbia and Vancouver's Island joined the confederation in 1871, the year preceding Lord Dufferin's appointment. He was therefore the first Governor-General who ruled over the vast territory of British North America, from the shores of the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The experiment of confederation was first tried in its integrity under his auspices.

The political matters, indeed, which occupied much of Lord Dufferin's time in Canada need not detain us for many sentences. The allegations of corruption which ultimately destroyed Sir John Macdonald's Government, and led to the formation of Mr. Mackenzie's Ministry and the trial and pardon of Lepine,[2] who had been accessory

[1] The Duke of Argyll said that Lord Dufferin was the most intimate friend of his own age he ever had ("Memoirs," vol. i. p. 662).

[2] Two constitutional questions were raised on these matters which perhaps deserve notice. (1) Sir John Macdonald was forced to assent to the appointment of a parliamentary committee to inquire into the allegations of corruption, and to a Bill empowering the committee to examine witnesses on oath. Lord Dufferin, we think rightly, gave his assent to the Bill, which was, however, disallowed by the Home Government as *ultra vires*. We very much doubt whether the Home Government would have so acted twenty years afterwards. (2) The execution of Lepine's sentence would have excited so much opposition among the French Canadians that Lord

to the murder of an Englishman named Scott, raised issues, difficult and delicate at the time, which have long since been consigned to the lumber-room of history. The true service which Lord Dufferin rendered in Canada was that he impressed on the Canadians the value of their connection with the mother-country; and that he taught the people of the United Kingdom to estimate at its worth the importance of their great transatlantic dominion. It must be recollected that the year in which Lord Dufferin went to Canada was the year which followed the Treaty of Washington; that, in the negotiations which had preceded the treaty, American statesmen had hinted that the true solution of the dispute lay in the cession of Canada to the United States; and that, if American authorities are accurate, the suggestion had not been repudiated with any warmth by the British Minister at Washington. It must also be remembered that one of the foremost members of the British Cabinet, Mr. Lowe, had actually told Lord Dufferin that he ought to make it his "business to get rid of the Dominion." It may safely be said that, when Lord Dufferin returned home, some six years afterwards, no British statesman of either party would have ventured to give such a hint.

This change of thought may no doubt be attributed to other causes, but it was largely assisted by Lord Dufferin's conduct. In the first place, the Queen had never been represented in Canada with anything approaching the pomp with which Lord Dufferin invested his office. He

Dufferin obtained authority from the Colonial Office to commute it "in consultation with his Ministers." Lord Dufferin commuted the sentence but dispensed with his Ministers' advice, and the Colonial Office approved his conduct, but gave instructions to prevent a repetition of it. We are inclined to think that the Colonial Office was wrong. The commutation of a sentence for a crime associated with party politics is one of the few things which a constitutional governor may, and perhaps ought, to take upon himself to do.

gave splendid balls and magnificent dinners; his expenditure was so lavish that the Duke of Argyll declared that people were saying that he would be "entirely ruinated." Nor was it only the splendour with which he surrounded his office that ensured his popularity. Wherever they went, Lady Dufferin and he were the centre of society; and the Governor-General was holding levees, patronising lacrosse matches, attending University convocations, receiving addresses on all possible occasions, and delivering happy impromptu replies. The magic of his presence disarmed opposition; and the town which, on his entrance, showed neither interest nor curiosity, turned out its whole population to display its appreciation of him on his departure. But Lord Dufferin did more than this. His restless love of travel carried him through the length and breadth of the vast Dominion, exploring its great lakes, investigating the capabilities of its still unoccupied territories, and threading its "interminable labyrinth of watery lanes and reaches" on the Pacific coast, which promised endless "facilities for intercommunication for the future inhabitants of this wonderful region." Other travellers, after the fatigues of such a journey, accomplished without the luxuries of modern travel, might have been disposed to rest. Lord Dufferin's enthusiasm impelled him to communicate to others what he had seen. His eloquent language taught the Canadians themselves for the first time the value of the great territories which British enterprise and British statesmanship had secured to them. His words, brought home to England, impressed the British people with new ideas of the vast heritage which their fathers had been led to regard as a useless encumbrance. Thenceforward there was no more talk of cession or independence.

After six years' residence in Canada Lord Dufferin, not unnaturally, desired some rest at home. As a matter

of fact, he hardly reached England before Lord Beaconsfield proposed to him a new and difficult duty. Russia, in 1879, was brooding over the decisions of the Congress of Berlin, which had deprived her of some fruits which she had hoped to gather from the war with Turkey. She was concurrently pushing forward her advanced posts in Central Asia, and already occupying positions which British statesmen thought the safety of India required to be in neutral keeping. Questions of the utmost delicacy, therefore, awaited solution; and Lord Dufferin was well qualified to deal with them. We do not gather, however, from Sir A. Lyall's pages, whether any real progress towards an agreement was made during Lord Dufferin's stay at St. Petersburg. He was certainly in close communication with the Ministers at home. Though he only reached St. Petersburg in March, 1879, he was in England in the following May. He returned to London in August, and he was specially detained by Lord Salisbury, and not allowed to leave England till the following December. We confess we should have liked to ascertain, from so competent an authority as Sir A. Lyall, something of what passed between Lord Salisbury and Lord Dufferin. We long for a little seasonable indiscretion. But Sir A. Lyall, instead of satisfying our curiosity, merely gives us a picture of Lord Dufferin's "Sheridanish" liberality, which turned the British Embassy into a court, and made Lady Dufferin and himself "the most charming and popular diplomatists who had ever been at St. Petersburg." This brilliant picture, indeed, is enclosed in a dark setting. Lord Dufferin had not been two months in Russia when he had to report how the Emperor, "walking in the square before his palace, was met by a respectably dressed man, who saluted him, stepped aside, and fired several shots" at him; in the following February an attempt was made "to blow up the Emperor's apart-

ments"; in March, Count Melikoff, who had been invested with unlimited executive authority, was fired at and wounded; and finally, in March, 1881, the fatal bomb was thrown which terminated the Emperor's life.

At this time, Mr. Gladstone's Government, which had succeeded to power the year before, had decided on transferring Lord Dufferin from St. Petersburg to Constantinople. Sir Alfred again is provokingly discreet; and we get no indication of the reasons which suggested the transfer at a time when difficult and delicate negotiations were in progress at the Russian Court. It is probable, however, that Mr. Gladstone's Government may have concluded that the disorganisation of the Ottoman Empire and the failure of the Sultan to carry out the reforms in Asia which he had promised Lord Beaconsfield to effect, necessitated the appointment of the strongest available man to the Porte, and even suggested the nomination of the statesman who twenty years before, had done such good service in the Lebanon. At any rate, in the beginning of 1881, Lord Dufferin was hurriedly transferred from St. Petersburg to Constantinople, from an atmosphere charged with Nihilism and conspiracy to "the turbid and chaotic politics of the Osmanli Empire." It is hardly necessary to say that he failed to introduce any real order into the Sultan's affairs. The apathy of the Porte and the indifference of all his diplomatic colleagues would, in any case, have deprived him of any prospects of success. But, as a matter of fact, his attention was almost immediately diverted from the affairs of Turkey to the affairs of Egypt; for the deposition of Ismail Pasha, and the installation of Prince Tewfik in his stead, paved the way for the military revolt under Arabi which led, directly or indirectly, to the bombardment of Alexandria and to the campaign of Tel-el-Kebir; and Mr. Gladstone's Government, which had

rifted into a position of considerable difficulty, decided n sending Lord Dufferin to Egypt to inquire into and eport upon the whole situation.

The task which was thus set him we may at once ay was impracticable. The work of replacing chaos y order, whether it is undertaken in a great country r a great department, requires above all else time; nd time was the one thing which the British Cabinet vas not disposed to grant. It was anxious—and no loubt it had good diplomatic reason for its anxiety—o withdraw from Egypt at the earliest possible oppor-unity; and Lord Granville sent despatch after despatch o his agent asking for his immediate opinion on various ubjects. Lord Dufferin very sensibly asked this Minister n a hurry to allow him breathing time. But he so ar complied with the wishes of his employers that ne actually made his final report within three months of his arrival at Cairo. This report foreshadowed "the creation, within certain prudent limits, of representative nstitutions, of municipal and communal self-government, and of a political existence untrammelled by external im-portunity, though aided, indeed, as it must be for a time, by sympathetic advice and assistance." Representative nstitutions Lord Dufferin proposed to found by allow-ng village constituencies to elect members of provincial councils, which councils were in their turn to elect a majority of the members of a legislative council; and by forming a general assembly, rather more than one half of whose members were to be delegated by the spokesmen of the villages. Sir A. Lyall claims that "no material alteration has been made in these institutions during the twenty years that have passed since they were founded by Lord Dufferin in 1883"; and, in a certain sense, Sir A. Lyall is right. In theory the institu-tions which Lord Dufferin founded still exist. Egypt

is still provided with a legislative council which does not legislate, and with a general assembly that does not assemble. As Lord Cromer wrote with quiet sarcasm, in a recent report, "Although the Legislative Council and Assembly have existed for some twenty years, sufficient experience has not yet been gained of the working of these institutions to justify any confident forecast being made as to the services which in the future they may possibly render to Egypt. 'The metamorphic spirit of the age,' to use an expression employed by their distinguished author, operates slowly."

In writing thus we have no desire to criticise harshly Lord Dufferin's famous report; on the contrary, it is clear that he understood the situation much better than his employers at home. While they were announcing that "British troops will be withdrawn from Egypt as promptly as may be permitted by a prudent examination of the country," he had the prescience to foresee that they could not be withdrawn. It was "absolutely necessary to prevent the fabric we have raised from tumbling to the ground the moment our sustaining hand is withdrawn. The administrative system must have time to consolidate, in order to resist the disintegrating influence from within and without, and to acquire the use and knowledge of its own capacities. Above all, the persons who have staked their future on its existence must have some guarantee that it will endure. . . . Unless they are convinced that we intend to shield and foster the system we have established, it will be vain to expect the timid politicians of the East to identify themselves with its existence."

In these words, at any rate, Lord Dufferin showed that he grasped the main condition of the problem that he had been deputed to solve. Egypt, in 1883, had much more need of firm guidance than of a legislative council

or a general assembly; and it is to Lord Cromer's administrative capacity, and not to Lord Dufferin's elaborate report, that she owes her regeneration.

We need not loiter over the months during which, after his return from Egypt, Lord Dufferin continued to occupy the British Embassy at Constantinople. In our judgment there is something inexpressibly painful in the position of a distinguished diplomatist sincerely anxious to promote the welfare of the populations of the Turkish Empire, but thwarted at every turn by the indifference or opposition of his brother ambassadors, and the cunning and procrastinating tendencies of Turkish statecraft. In August, 1884, a little more than two years after his arrival at Constantinople, he was happily summoned home to discharge more important duties. Lord Ripon was laying down the Indian Viceroyalty; and Lord Dufferin was chosen to succeed Lord Ripon.

Sir Alfred Lyall, with the natural predilections of a distinguished Indian official, says that, "for an Englishman, the grand climacteric of honour and power is attained when he enters upon the Governor-Generalship of India, and has been passed from the hour when he resigns it." This is perhaps an exaggeration, but we admit that there is no other position under the British Crown, outside the limits of the United Kingdom itself, so worthy of the ambition of a great Englishman. Lord Dufferin, years before, had undoubtedly aspired to this great office. But Lord Northbrook had been preferred to him in 1872, and he had been sent to win distinction elsewhere. In 1884, when he was finally chosen to preside over the destinies of our great Eastern Empire, he had attained an age when most men think it wiser to retire from the heat of an Indian climate; he had completed his fifty-eighth year; and, during the preceding twelve years, he had been continuously occupied with labour in Canada,

St. Petersburg, Constantinople, and Egypt, which would have strained the strength of many a younger man.

Lord Dufferin, however, on his arrival at Calcutta, showed no symptom either of the fatigue which results from work, or of the lassitude which attends age. He threw himself into the multifarious duties of a Governor-General; and his singular capacity for assimilating and explaining the views of other men, who had thoroughly mastered the subjects on which they were called on to advise, enabled him to make his mark on Indian legislation. He showed, moreover, the same desire which he had displayed ten years before in Canada, to make himself personally acquainted with every part of the country; and he not only visited Madras and Bombay, but he travelled from the farthest west to the farthest east of the Indian Empire. We have, however, no space to consider the domestic matters which engrossed Lord Dufferin's attention. We must confine ourselves to those questions of foreign policy which thrust themselves to the front immediately after his arrival in India.

The foreign policy of the Indian Empire is necessarily affected by the attitude of the Foreign Office at home to other Powers; and in 1884 the relations of this country with other European nations were not too friendly. The proceedings at the Congress of Berlin had naturally irritated Russia; the occupation of Egypt was equally distasteful to France; and Russia on the north-west and France on the east were near neighbours of our Indian Empire.

Disputes with Russia in Europe had always created anxieties on our Indian frontier. Distrust of Russia in the thirties had led to the first Afghan War; the Crimean War had been largely responsible for the Persian War of 1856–57; and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 had been followed by a renewed occupation of Afghanistan, by

the dethronement of Shere Ali, and the installation of Abdurrahman at Cabul. But these events had not allayed the prevailing uneasiness. The constant advance of Russia towards Afghanistan, and the occupation of Merv, had created the anxiety which the Duke of Argyll had called "Mervousness"; and Lord Dufferin's immediate predecessor, Lord Ripon, had formally assured the Amir that the British Government, "admitting no right of interference by foreign Powers in his country, undertook to aid him in repelling unprovoked aggression, provided that he followed our advice in regard to external relations." Wisely or unwisely, therefore, we had undertaken to defend a vague and ill-defined frontier hundreds of miles from our own territory. There seemed every prospect that we might be called upon to redeem the pledge which we had thus given; for exactly the same influences which had carried our own army to the Himalayas were stimulating the advance of Russia to the south; and at last, in March, 1885—a few months after Lord Dufferin's arrival in India—Russian troops occupied Panjdeh, a fertile valley within the Afghan frontier, and created by so doing the crisis which Lord Ripon had undertaken to meet in arms.

It fortunately happened that, at the moment when news of this occupation reached India, the Amir himself, in response to Lord Dufferin's invitation, was the Viceroy's guest at Rawal Pindi. Lord Dufferin soon found that, while British statesmen and the British people were disposed to regard the occupation of Panjdeh as an affront which might require to be avenged by war, Abdurrahman looked upon it "as one of those not intolerable irregularities which occasionally happen on a rough unsettled frontier, and which are not supposed to have any necessary connection with formal hostilities." Lord Dufferin also ascertained that, in the Amir's opinion,

a new advance of a British force into Afghanistan, for the purpose of defending the Amir against the Russians, was a much greater calamity than the loss of a few square miles of disputed territory. The Amir, in fact, was determined that Afghanistan should not be made the battlefield of other nations. His refusal of military assistance "came as an unexpected relief from the liabilities arising out of the territorial guarantee." It paved the way for an understanding with Russia; and, through the efforts of the British Foreign Office and the energy of Colonel (now Sir West) Ridgeway, both at St. Petersburg and on the Afghan frontier, the boundary of Russia and Afghanistan was successfully delimited, and one effectual step was taken to secure the peace of the world.

The preservation of peace, however, on this occasion was due neither to Lord Ripon, who had guaranteed the safety of the Afghan frontier, nor to Lord Dufferin, who might have found it necessary to redeem Lord Ripon's pledge, but to Abdurrahman's sensible conclusion that the loss of Panjdeh was preferable to a British army in Afghanistan. But, because we ascribe the preservation of peace to the Amir, we must not be supposed to underrate the merit of Lord Dufferin's conduct. A less ready man might have failed to divine the Amir's views; a less sagacious man might have failed to take advantage of them. Lord Dufferin had hardly paved the way for a settlement on the north-west before new difficulties arose on the east of India. Between the possessions which the French had acquired in Tonquin and our Indian Empire lay the still independent portions of Siam and the remnant of the Burmese Empire known as Upper Burma. The relations between Burma and India had never been friendly; and in 1879 it was thought advisable to withdraw the British Resident from Mandalay, the

capital of the kingdom. In 1885, when Lord Dufferin was preparing to meet the Amir, "a report was passed up to headquarters from British Burma that King Theebaw had executed a treaty with the French Government under which special consular and commercial privileges were accorded to France. The news came at an awkward moment, for England and Russia were just then on the verge of a serious dispute over the Afghan boundary, and it raised a question of extreme gravity."

In fact, so long as war with Russia was probable, common prudence suggested a policy of abstention in Burma. But the arrangement with the Amir, which removed the danger of war in the north-west, left Lord Dufferin free to deal with the new difficulty on the eastern frontier of India.

The troubles which had thus successively arisen in Afghanistan and Burma were fundamentally similar, although the circumstances were very different. Sir Alfred Lyall tells us—and Sir Alfred has probably studied more closely than any other Englishman the policy of buffer-states—"Just as a fortress or a line of entrenchments requires an open space around or in front of it, so it is manifestly advantageous for the security of a kingdom to be surrounded by a ring of territories with which powerful neighbours must not meddle. . . . The kingdom of Burma, which marched with Lower Bengal on its eastern frontier, had always been reckoned as part of the glacis that encircles our Indian lines of defence."

Nothing can be clearer than this statement. Yet, as we shall show almost immediately, Sir Alfred Lyall himself, in another passage, throws some doubt upon it. Lord Dufferin, at any rate, seems from the first to have had no faith in the buffer policy.

"If" (he wrote) "the French proceedings should eventuate in any serious attempt to forestall us in Upper

Burma, I should not hesitate to annex the country; and, as at present advised, I think that this mode of procedure would be preferable to setting up a doubtful prince."

He wrote still more strongly in the following October:

"As to the relative advantages of placing a protected prince upon the throne, or of annexation pure and simple, I have no hesitation in saying that the latter is the better course. It is quite enough to be worried by a buffer policy on the West without reduplicating it on the East. Moreover, elasticity and a certain power of intermediate resistance are the essential qualities which constitute a 'buffer,' and to a certain though limited extent they may be said to exist in Afghanistan; but Burma is so soft and pulpy a substance that she could never be put to such a use."

On the refusal, therefore, of the Burmese Government to receive a British mission, General Prendergast was ordered to march on Mandalay; and the conquest of Upper Burma was accomplished with as much ease as the conquest of Scindh had been effected, with even less justification, nearly fifty years before.

The annexation of Upper Burma added to the British Empire an area larger than that of France, and a population roughly computed at 4,000,000. But, far from removing the real cause which had led to it, our boundary was carried nearer to the French possessions. Some years afterwards, when Lord Dufferin was himself ambassador at Paris, the French advance in Siam led to a renewal of the old trouble. The British Government desired to neutralise, as a buffer-state or intermediate zone between Burma and French Tonquin, a small outlying tract lying on both sides of the Mekong river. Under Lord Dufferin's guidance at Paris the policy of the buffer was abandoned; and the Mekong

became the frontier of France and England. Sir Alfred Lyall adds the commentary:—

"The project of maintaining an independent tract on the Upper Mekong eventually proved not worth the trouble that had been expended over it. Both parties had at first agreed to it; yet neither appears clearly to have understood that the system of neutralising petty independent states lying between powerful rivals, jealous of each other's ascendancy . . . is not applicable to Asia."

A conclusion which we believe to be sound, but a conclusion which we fail to reconcile with Sir Alfred's apology for the buffer system, with which he introduces his Burmese chapter.

We must pass over the other and minor questions with which Lord Dufferin was concerned in India. We cannot even dwell on the projected mission to Lhassa, which he abandoned, and which Lord Curzon has carried out. Lord Dufferin's services in India gained him a marquisate: he had been raised to an earldom in 1872. His own advancing years, and his natural desire to promote the interests of his children, induced him to seek employment nearer home before his full period of service was over; and at the end of 1888 he returned to Europe and took up the embassy at Rome.

Lord Dufferin had still eight years of public work before him as ambassador at Rome and at Paris. At Rome he did good service in settling difficulties which had arisen between Italy and this country in north-east Africa. At Paris, where he was first received with suspicion and attacked with venom, he outlived his unpopularity and did something at a difficult time to soften the relations between the two great Powers of Western Europe. At the end of 1896 he finally laid down the burden of office which he had borne so long.

The few remaining years of life which were left to him were embittered by a catastrophe to which we need make no further reference. But, with this deplorable exception, he had passed a life which had been as happy and prosperous as it was useful and honourable.

It is not easy to sum up in a few sentences the merits of a statesman who filled so many offices, or the character of a man who showed such versatility, as Lord Dufferin. Greatly as he distinguished himself in many prominent positions, we are not, indeed, sure that he stands quite in the first place in any one of them. As a ruler of India, for example, he ranks below Lord Dalhousie; as a diplomatist he ranks below Lord Ampthill. But Lord Dalhousie could not have made the Canadian speeches; and Lord Ampthill could not have conquered or pacified Burma. It is not, however, the eminence which he attained in any one position, but the versatility which enabled him to do so many things well, that impresses the imagination. And this amazing versatility was evident in small things as well as in great. For the man who pacified the Lebanon, who won the loyalty of the Canadians, who taught his own fellow-countrymen the value of Canada, who laid down the principles on which the government of Egypt should be based, who saved us from war with Russia in Afghanistan, and who gave us Upper Burma, was the same man who could make a fluent speech in dog-Latin in Iceland, who could reply to a Greek address in Greek at McGill University, and who could hold half an hour's conversation with the Shah of Persia in Persian.

As an orator, Lord Dufferin stands on a pedestal by himself. Other men had more capacity in debate, and more skill in expounding a difficult subject; but none of his contemporaries excelled him in the qualities which —whether he wrote or spoke—enabled him to attract

and command attention. Severe critics may indeed think that Lord Dufferin put too much colour into his speeches, too much metaphor into his despatches ; but it may be replied that these very qualities ensured their being widely read at the time at which they were written or delivered. A more subdued tone might have seemed more suitable for an official document or an official utterance ; but, if the Toronto speech had been couched in ordinary language, it would not have been read from one end of Canada to the other, or have been carried across the Atlantic and reproduced in this country.

The literary qualities which Lord Dufferin's speeches and writings display might have made him, in other circumstances, a distinguished man of letters. Pierre Loti himself, in his great novel, " Pêcheur d'Islande," has no finer description of a storm in the northern sea than that which Lord Dufferin gave in the " Letters from High Latitudes." But we are not sure that the readiness with which Lord Dufferin spoke and wrote did not occasionally induce him to speak when he had better have kept silence. Ambassadors, it is said, were once known as orators ; but oratory is the last art which the modern diplomatist should cultivate. Lord Dufferin's annual speeches in the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris may have been useful, but they were—to use the word which he himself applied to the first of them —"risky." Nothing but inconvenience would result if our ambassadors to the great countries of the Old and New Worlds were to think it within the lines of their duty to make public speeches in the capitals in which they reside either on their own position or on their country's policy.

Lord Dufferin's public utterances were, no doubt, partly inspired by the knowledge that, in the capacity for public speaking, he had few superiors. Most men take

a natural pleasure in doing those things which they know they do exceptionally well. The love of displaying his own personality—which, in an inferior man, we might be tempted to call by the harsh term "self-advertisement"—probably also accounted for the magnificence with which Lord Dufferin liked to surround himself. His expenditure, both in Canada and St. Petersburg, must have seriously crippled an estate whose value had already been diminished by the cost of unremunerative improvements and the effects of the Irish land laws. It seems ungenerous to condemn an expenditure undertaken in the public service for public objects. But it is undesirable that our diplomatists and our colonial governors should largely outspend the incomes attached to the posts which they fill, for, by doing so, they make it difficult for the Ministry of the day to select the best possible men for these posts; they restrict the choice, not to the best men, but to the best men of ample wealth.

When all this has been said, however, Lord Dufferin will be recollected as a statesman who filled many high positions and who discharged their duties with credit to himself and advantage to his country. In private life he will be remembered as the best of friends and the most agreeable of companions. We wish that Sir Alfred Lyall could have told us a little more of the social qualities of a man whom he knew so well, and who endeared himself to so large a circle of his contemporaries. We derive some idea of what Lord Dufferin was in his youth from his mother's admirable letters to him; but we get no adequate account from Sir Alfred Lyall of the qualities which made him, to the very end of his life, the most agreeable of companions and the most sympathetic of friends.

With this one exception, we have nothing but praise for Sir Alfred Lyall. He has given us an excellent life

of one of the most distinguished men of his time. He has succeeded in reducing his narrative to dimensions which we cordially recommend as an example to inferior and more diffuse biographers, and he has given us a book which the ordinary reader will read with pleasure and the historian will consult with profit.

EDWARD GIBBON

THE position of Gibbon among English men of letters is unique. He stands, without a rival, as the first of our historians; and, thanks to his famous Autobiography, he is familiar to us as a man. We know him much better than we know most of his contemporaries. And this knowledge, it is fair to recollect, is largely due to the labour and good sense of a friendly peer. Lord Sheffield, or Mr. Holroyd, as he was at the time, made Gibbon's acquaintance at Lausanne in 1764. For the remaining thirty years of the historian's life he was his constant correspondent and intimate friend. Gibbon declared in his will that he could never discharge his debt of gratitude to the warm and active friendship of the peer, whom he describes in one of his letters as "the man of the world whom I love and esteem the most." He made Lord Sheffield one of his executors, and he entrusted him with the publication of his unpublished papers.

Lord Sheffield, who thus became the friend and editor of Gibbon, was known chiefly to his contemporaries as the author of some dull economical treatises. A great Sussex landowner, he had convinced himself that the aim and object of legislation was Protection; and he advocated the cause in which he believed with a persistence which would have done credit to Mr. Chamberlain. His family had not much patience with the ponderous pamphlets in which he stated and restated his case. One of his daughters,

who lived to become the first Lady Stanley of Alderley, complained that her father was "attending only to the herring fishery or the woollen manufacture." Another daughter spoke of the subject of her father's studies as "nasty commerce," while we have somewhere read that Canning once spent a wet Sunday morning in a country house in carefully erasing with a penknife the *w*'s in one of Lord Sheffield's pamphlets on the wool trade, and in inserting *f*'s in their place. Thus amended, the leading sentence ran somewhat as follows: "We have no doubt that, with due protection, the production of British *F*ools may be rendered sufficient for our National Wants, so as to render the importation of Foreign *F*ools wholly unnecessary."

Such was the man to whom Gibbon entrusted his unpublished manuscripts, and to whose editorship we owe the Autobiography which has delighted thousands of readers for the best part of a century. But the world of letters hardly knew the extent of its debt to Lord Sheffield. It assumed that he had given us the Autobiography as it came to him. But, in the last few years, the present Lord Sheffield authorised the publication of Gibbon's unpublished papers; and it was found that, instead of a single autobiography, Gibbon left six autobiographical fragments behind him. All of them seem to have been composed between 1788 and 1793. The first, the earliest sketch, was commenced in 1788, and carries down the narrative to 1761; the second goes over the same ground, in greater detail, and comes down to 1764; the third, written in 1789, brings the story down to 1772; the fourth, written in 1790–91, stops short at 1770; the fifth extends to 1789; and the sixth, which is the most perfect as far as it goes, written in 1793, ends abruptly, while the author is an undergraduate in 1753. The published Autobiography with which we have hitherto

been familiar is woven with extraordinary skill from these various narratives. The opening sentences are taken from the first of the autobiographies, though some passages, from a fragment which was intended to become a seventh autobiography, are incorporated in them After these prefatory paragraphs, Lord Sheffield mainly relied on the sixth autobiography. The second, third, and fifth autobiographies contribute, in varying proportions, to the rest of the narrative.

A couple of illustrations may show the manner in which Lord Sheffield executed his task.[1] The well-known passage in which Gibbon describes his courtship of Mlle. Curchod is taken from the second autobiography; but the most famous sentence in it, "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son," is cut out of the third. Again, the journey to Italy is taken from the third autobiography; but the passage in which Gibbon relates the conception of his History is imported into the narrative from the fifth.

"It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind."[2]

If, however, Lord Sheffield, with his daughter's help, displayed judgment in selecting and skill in blending his materials, he also showed taste in what he omitted. In whatever Gibbon wrote, whether it related to the

[1] In executing his task Lord Sheffield had the assistance of his daughter, Maria Josepha Holroyd, who marked in pencil the passages which her father wove into the famous Autobiography.

[2] The passage in the third autobiography ran: "Yet the historian of the decline and fall must not regret his time or expence, since it was the view of Italy and Rome which determined the choice of the subject. In my journal the place and moment of conception are recorded: the 15th or October, 1764, in the close of evening, as I sat musing in the Church of the Zoccolanti or Franciscan Fryars, while they were singing Vespers, in the temple of Jupiter on the ruins of the Capitol."

decaying empire or to the early Christians, or to his own life, he felt and thought strongly; and he wrote what he thought. Lord Sheffield evidently considered that some of his friend's judgments, if they were made public, would give unnecessary pain to persons who were still alive, and would throw discredit on the author's heart. Thus, in Gibbon's account of his mother's death, the Autobiography runs :—

"After a real or nominal residence at Kingston school of near two years, I was finally recalled (December, 1747) by my mother's death, which was occasioned in her thirty-eighth year, by the consequences of her last labour. *As I had seldom enjoyed the smiles of maternal tenderness*,[1] *she was rather the object of my respect than of my love; some natural tears were soon wiped.* I was too young to feel the importance of her loss."

And the passage which we have printed in italics was struck out by Lord Sheffield. In the same way, in describing his father's death, Gibbon wrote :—

"*The tears of a son are seldom lasting.* I submitted to the order of Nature, and my grief was soothed by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety. *Few, perhaps, are the children who, after the expiration of some months or years, would sincerely rejoyce in the resurrection of their parents: and it is a melancholy truth that my Father's death, not unhappy for himself, was the only event that could save me from an hopeless life of obscurity and indigence.*"[2]

[1] In one of his letters to Lord Sheffield, Gibbon described himself as "a puny child, neglected by my mother."

[2] Gibbon evidently thought that his own views about fathers were shared by the generality of sons. He wrote to Lord Sheffield, in 1774, of a friend common to both—and the passage was suppressed by Lord Sheffield when he published the letter—"Incredible as it sounds to the generality of sons, and as it ought to sound to most fathers, he considered the old gentleman as a friend."

The italics again show what Lord Sheffield rejected.

Perhaps we may give an even better specimen of Lord Sheffield's workmanship by comparing the accounts which Gibbon gave of his second tutor at Oxford with the published Autobiography. In the second of his memoirs Gibbon wrote :—

"Before my return to Oxford, after spending the vacation in Hampshire, Dr. Waldegrave was removed to a College living : but I was transferred, with the rest of his pupils, to his Academical heir, a Dr. Winchester, whose only science was supposed to be that of a broker and salesman. From my own experience, I am not indeed qualified to represent his character : his person I scarcely knew, and in the eight months, for which he demanded a salary, I never received a word of lesson or advice from the Director of my Studies."

In the sixth autobiography the passage runs :—

"After the departure of Dr. Waldegrave, I was transferred with the rest of his live stock to a Senior fellow, whose literary and moral character did not command the respect of the College. Dr. Winchester well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform."

In Lord Sheffield's version we have—

"After the departure of Dr. Waldegrave I was transferred, with his other pupils, to his Academical heir, whose literary character did not command the respect of the College. Dr. ——— well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform."

Almost every word is Gibbon's ; yet the passage is compounded from two different accounts, and Dr. Winchester's name, and the worst charges against him, are suppressed.

If Gibbon wrote occasionally with bitterness of other

people, he was sometimes also betrayed into expressions about his own behaviour which Lord Sheffield had the good taste to suppress. We will only give one example. In relating his father's embarrassments Gibbon wrote:—

"Each year multiplied the number and exhausted the patience of his creditors. Under these painful circumstances *my own behaviour was not only guiltless, but meritorious. Without stipulating any personal advantages*, I consented, *at a mature and well-informed age*, to an additional mortgage, to the sale of Putney, and to every sacrifice that could alleviate his distress."

The italics again mark the passages which Lord Sheffield struck out. The tact of the peer corrected the taste of the historian. When we read such passages—and we could multiply our examples by scores—we understand the friendly direction that nothing should be published the publication of which Lord Sheffield had not himself either directed or approved; and Miss Holroyd's observation, "If the Papers had fallen into the hands of a Boswell, what fun the world would have had!"[1]

It must, however, be admitted that few men have had better reason than Gibbon for satisfaction with their own conduct and for complaining of the conduct of their

[1] We have nothing but commendation for Lord Sheffield's taste and skill in blending the six autobiographies into one Memoir. But we cannot justify the liberties which he occasionally took with the correspondence. The Editor of the correspondence gives the following curious, though extreme, instance of Lord Sheffield's editorial methods. "The letter numbered xxxii. in Lord Sheffield's edition of 'Letters to and from Edward Gibbon, Esq.,' is dated October 13, 1772. It begins with the first four lines of [a letter] written on April 21, 1772. The next nine lines are taken from the commencement of the letter written on October 3, 1772. The five following lines consist of the letter written on November 3, 1772. The next four lines are taken from the letter dated October 30, 1772. The two following lines are from the letter written on October 15, 1772. Thus what purports to be a real letter in itself, proves to be a patchwork composed from five letters extending over a period of six months."

relatives. In one sense, no doubt, he was born amidst many advantages. His father had inherited a considerable estate, "magnified in his own eyes by flattery and hope." [1] His mother, who "vainly attempted to check with a silken rein the passions of an independent husband," was an "amiable and affectionate" wife and a beautiful woman. Gibbon was the eldest son; his five brothers and sisters died young, and their deaths left him the undisputed heir to the whole of his father's patrimony. And this patrimony, if his father had lived with tolerable prudence, would have made the son a very rich man. It must then have been with no slight mortification that Gibbon saw his inheritance gradually melting away under his father's recklessness and mismanagement. Perhaps, indeed, when he was asked to consent to some fresh mortgage, or some other sacrifice which his father's increasing embarrassments necessitated, he may have been tempted to think, as other men have thought before and since, that life would be tolerable were it not for one's relations.

Gibbon was born at Putney on April 29 (Old Style), May 8 (New Style), 1737. His childhood was sickly.

"My poor aunt has often told me how long she was apprehensive lest my crazy frame, which is now of common shape, should remain for ever crooked and deformed. . . . I was successively afflicted by lethargies and feavers: by opposite tendences to a consumptive and dropsical habit: by a contraction of my nerves, a fistula in my eye, and the bite of a dog most vehemently suspected of madness. In the list of my sufferings from my birth to the age of puberty few physical ills would be omitted. . . . There was a time when I swallowed more physic than food; and

[1] This extract, and the extracts which follow, are from the various autobiographies. We have endeavoured as far as possible to quote passages which Lord Sheffield rejected, and which are consequently new to the reader.

my body is still marked with the indelible scars of lancets, issues, and caustics."

Fortunately for Gibbon and for the world, his mother's sister, Catherine Porten, one of the few people for whom the historian felt a genuine affection, nursed him through his many illnesses, and had the satisfaction of seeing the boy to whom she devoted such constant care gradually grow into a strong and healthy man.

Yet the delicacy which interfered with the historian's development in his earlier years, and which arrested both his physical and mental growth, probably left its mark on him for life. He had no taste for the rougher amusements either of the boy or of the man. In his boyhood "the dynasties of Assyria and Egypt were [his] top and cricket ball." In his maturity, "my Father could never inspire me with his love and knowledge of farming. When he galloped away on a fleet hunter to follow the Duke of Richmond's foxhounds, I saw him depart without a wish to join in the Sport; and, in the command of an ample manour, I valued the supply of the kitchen much more than the exercise of the field. I never handled a gun. I seldom mounted a horse; and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation."

A boy without the natural tastes of a boy could not be otherwise than unhappy. Gibbon was placed at seven in the hands of a private tutor; at the age of eight he was sent to a rough school at Kingston, where, "by the common methods of discipline, at the expence of many tears and some blood [he] purchased the knowledge of the Latin Syntax;" and in his twelfth year he was moved to the freer atmosphere of Westminster, where his maternal aunt, scorning "a life of obligation and dependence," had taken a boarding-house. His

aunt's care probably saved him from some of the harder experiences in the hard lot of a Westminster boy in the middle of the eighteenth century. But his delicate constitution interfered with his studies, and after some eighteen months he was removed from the school. Ill and suffering as the boy was, he had an insatiable appetite for reading.

"Our family collection was decently furnished; the circulating libraries of London and Bath afforded a rich treasures (*sic*). I borrowed many books, and some I contrived to purchase from my scanty allowance. My father's friends, who visited the boy, were astonished at finding him surrounded with a heap of folios, of whose titles *they* were ignorant, and on whose contents *he* could pertinently discourse."

At last, as Gibbon approached his sixteenth year his health fortunately improved, and his father took what Gibbon called the "singular and desperate measure" of carrying him to Oxford. He arrived at the University "with a Stock of Erudition that might have puzzled a Doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a Schoolboy would have been ashamed." We have no intention of repeating the hard things which in later years he had to say of his short undergraduate career. The fourteen months which he spent at the University, so he declared were most completely lost for every purpose of improvement. "But his unsatiable appetite for reading still remained." Some Popish books unluckily fell into his hands.

"I was bewildered in the maze of controversy, and my understanding was oppressed by their specious arguments, till I believed that I believed in the stupendous mysteries and infallible authority of the Catholic Church."

He was received into the Church of Rome; as the University in those days had no room for either Papist or Nonconformist, he was forced to leave; and his father,

taking the wisest step which he ever took in his life, sent his son to M. Pavillard, a Calvinist minister at Lausanne. No happier choice could have been made. Gibbon, indeed, at first complained of the discomfort of his new life.

"The minister's wife, Madame Pavillard, governed our domestic economy. I now speak of her without resentment, but in sober truth she was ugly, dirty, proud, ill-tempered, and covetous."

But he went on to admit—and our italics again mark the passages which Lord Sheffield rejected—

"The real hardships of my situation, *the house, the table, and the mistress*, were alleviated by time; and *to this coarse and scanty fare I am perhaps indebted for the establishment of my constitution.*"

It seemed at first a more serious objection that M. Pavillard "was not eminent for genius or learning." The pupil soon outstripped the tutor, who led the rising scholar "through the Alphabet, the Grammar, and the Gospel, to the utmost limits of his own progress." But if M. Pavillard was deficient in scholarship, "by long practise he was skilled in the arts of teaching, and he laboured with assiduous patience to know the character, gain the affection, and open the mind of his English pupil." Under his encouragement Gibbon embarked in a great voyage of scholarship on an ocean which his preceptor had not the knowledge to traverse, and lived to admit that "whatever may have been the fruits of my Education, they must be ascribed to the fortunate shipwreck which cast me on the shores of the Leman lake. . . . Such as I am, in genius or learning or manners, I owe my creation to Lausanne; it was in that school that the statue was discovered in the block of marble; and my own religious folly, my father's blind resolution, produced the effects of the most deliberate wisdom."

But scholarship was not the only result of Gibbon's exile

at Lausanne. When he reached Switzerland he was a shy, awkward youth, who had never experienced the advantages of society. At Lausanne the Pavillards introduced him to all their acquaintances. He was received with kindness and indulgence in the best families. He even made the acquaintance of Voltaire; and he learned to mix with ease and familiarity with men of brains and women of beauty. These circumstances had, perhaps, almost as much influence on Gibbon's future life as his large and exact scholarship. The shy, awkward youth became one of the most agreeable of companions. When he reached Lausanne he had never contracted a permanent friendship. Thenceforward he never lost, except by death, any of the numerous friends whom he made.

M. Pavillard himself had probably greater pleasure in another circumstance. He was "not unmindful that his first task, his more important duty, was to reclaim me from the errors of Popery." The arguments which had induced the undergraduate to join the Church of Rome were attacked in detail; and within a year and a half of his reaching Switzerland Gibbon rejoined the Reformed Church.

He announces his conversion to his aunt, Miss Porten, in February, 1755:—

"DEAR MADAM,—I have at length good news to tell you: I am now a good Protestant, and am extremely glad of it: I have in all my letters taken notice of the different movements of my mind. Entirely Catholic when I came to Lausanne, wavering long time between the two systems, and at last fixed for the Protestant. . . . Could I leave off here I should be very glad, but I have another piece of news to acquaint you with . . . One evening I went to see Mr. Gee, one of the English now here. I found him in his room, playing at Pharaon [*sic*] with

some other gentlemen. [Gibbon was induced to join.] The play warmed, and about three o'clock next morning I found I had lost only [*sic*] forty guineas. Guess my situation (which I did not dare to communicate to any one); such a loss, and an utter impossibility of paying it. I took the worst party I could. I demanded my revenge: they gave it me, and the second meeting was still worse than the first. It cost me 1,760 [?2,760] francs or 110 guineas. . . . What party can I take? Should I acquaint my Father with it? What first fruits of a conversion should I give him? I have then no other resource but you. Tell me not that you are poor, that you have not enough for yourself. I do not address myself to you as the richest, but as the kindest of my relations. . . . I am too much agitated to go on. I will tell you something of myself in my next, *i.e.*, very soon.

"I am, dear Kitty, your unfortunate Nephew,

"E. GIBBON."

Miss Porten, instead of complying with her nephew's request, sent his letter to his father. And his stepmother —for his father had married again—endorsed it: "Please remember this letter was not addressed to his mother-in-law, but his aunt, an old cat as she was to refuse his request."

The sequel of the story proved that the boy who lost his money was more fortunate than the man who made it. Flushed with success, Mr. Gee went to Paris and played high.

"Once he had 150,000 livres (French money) in his pocket, but a week after he was 1,500 guineas in debt. The end was that his Mother, though extremely poor, paid all his debts and sent him into England, where he is now, having lost his commission, having hardly any other resource than his Majesty's highway. So much for Gee."

The boy who lost, on the contrary, contrived to pay his debts by retrenching his other expenses, and years afterwards was able to say to his stepmother:—

"I have never lost at play a hundred pounds at any one time; perhaps not in the course of my life. Play I neither love nor understand."

We must not conclude our account of Gibbon's first sojourn at Lausanne without some reference to his short engagement to Mlle. Curchod, to which we have already alluded. At the time of it Gibbon, it must be recollected, was not of age. Mlle. Curchod was "lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners." Her parents "honourably encouraged a connection which might raise their daughter above want and dependence." But the course of true love never runs smooth. Gibbon's father perhaps naturally objected to his son's marriage with the daughter of a penniless Swiss clergyman, and Gibbon, sighing as a lover, and obeying as a son, wrote to Mlle. Curchod and broke his engagement. Seven years afterwards the lady married M. Necker, and became the mother of Madame de Staël. Gibbon himself says that—

"My wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life: and my cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and chearfulness of the lady herself."

The lady's own letters, however, give a very different account of the affair. They showed, "so far as words could prove anything, that she had never ceased to love him." Rousseau, moreover, who was told the story, and asked to intercede in Mlle. Curchod's interest, "declined to interfere, saying that Gibbon was too cold-blooded a young man for his taste or for Mlle. Curchod's happiness." And Gibbon's own statement, made long afterwards, justifies Rousseau's suspicions:—

"A matrimonial alliance has ever been the object of my terror rather than of my wishes. I was not very strongly pressed by my family or my passions to propagate the name and race of the Gibbons, and if some reasonable temptations occurred in the neighbourhood, the vague idea never proceeded to the length of a serious negotiation."[1]

At last, after an exile of more than four years, Gibbon was invited by his father to return home.

"My Father's impatience for my return was not wholly of the disinterested kind. . . . The time of my recall had been so nicely computed that I arrived in London three days before I was of age; the priests and the altar had been prepared, and the victim was unconscious of the impending stroke. According to the forms and fictions of our law, I levied a fine and suffered a recovery; the entail was cut off; a sum of ten thousand pounds was raised on mortgage for my father's use, and he repaid the obligation by settling on me an annuity of three hundred pounds a year."

He said afterwards of this transaction, in a letter to his stepmother:—

"I was then a raw lad of one-and-twenty, unacquainted with law or business, and desirous of obliging my Father. He then gave me three hundred a year, a moderate allowance to which his eldest son would have had a natural claim, had no such transaction intervened."

On this allowance Gibbon lived in London, retiring

[1] When Gibbon wrote this passage in 1789, his memory must have played him a serious trick. It seems quite certain that, in 1774, he did seriously contemplate matrimony; and that he authorised his stepmother to feel the way for him with the lady of his choice. Religious differences seem to have interrupted the negotiation. But it must be confessed that Gibbon bore his disappointment with a calm which showed that his philosophy was stronger than his love. Lord Sheffield, who was aware of this negotiation, probably on that account struck out the passage which we have quoted in the text.

when his purse was empty to his father's seat in Hampshire, where he found a liberal maintenance, and in his "own studies an inexhaustible source of amusement." This quiet life was interrupted after it had lasted two years by the publication of his first essay, and the embodiment of the Hampshire Militia.

We know from Gibbon himself that the essay—on the Study of Literature—was commenced before he had left Lausanne, and was suggested by his own wide reading. It was composed in French—a language which had become more familiar than English to its author—and its publication was suggested by his father, who fancied that the knowledge of French which it displayed might procure his son some appointment at the Congress which was about to meet to negotiate the peace ultimately concluded in 1763. This object was not secured.

"It is not surprising that a work, of which the style and sentiments were so totally foreign, should have been more successful abroad than at home. . . . In England it was received with cold indifference, little read, and speedily forgotten. . . . The publication of my History fifteen years afterwards revived the memory of my first performance, and the Essay was eagerly sought in the shops, . . . and when a copy of the original Edition has been discovered in a sale, the primitive value of half-a-crown has risen to the fanciful price of a Guinea or thirty shillings."

Such is the account which Gibbon himself gave of what he calls "the loss of my literary maidenhead." At the time, however, of his first publication he was chiefly occupied in a very different manner. The Hampshire Militia was embodied in 1760, under the command of Sir Thomas Worsley, and Gibbon's father was the major of the regiment, in which Gibbon himself held a commission as captain. During the next two years and a half the regiment was quartered in a great many places in the southern

counties of England, and gradually acquired some degree of proficiency and discipline. Gibbon himself, though only a captain in rank, seems from the first to have exercised the chief authority in the battalion, to the command of which he ultimately succeeded. Sir Thomas Worsley was "an easy good-humoured man, fond of the table and of his bed;" the officers were "deficient in the knowledge of scholars and the manners of gentlemen," and Gibbon confesses that his colonel's "example encouraged the daily practise of hard drinking which has sown in my constitution the seeds of the gout," and which was probably the indirect cause of the illness which terminated his life. The society of the towns in which the regiment was quartered did not compensate for these drawbacks. At one of them Gibbon complains, in a letter to his stepmother, there is "a great deal of noise and no conversation; a great many people and no society; a most excessive familiarity and no friendship." On the other hand, Gibbon found leisure in the camp to continue his favourite studies; while even his reading did not interfere with the discharge of his military duties:—

"Under the care (may I presume to say?) of a veteran officer, the South Battalion of the Hampshire Militia acquired the degree of skill and discipline which was compatible with the brevity of time and the looseness of peaceful subordination."

And if the regiment owed much to Gibbon, Gibbon owed something to the regiment:—

"A familiar view of the discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the Phalanx and the Legion; and the Captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the Historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

At the end of 1762 the regiment was at last disem-

bodied, and Gibbon at once resolved to "execute the plan of foreign travel, which had been suspended above four years by the general war and my particular engagements." He set out in January, 1763, spent three or four months in Paris, where his essay introduced him to men of mark, and in May, after an absence of five years, he returned to Lausanne, where he remained for nearly twelve months.[1] In the following spring he crossed the Alps, and after visiting Milan, whose famous cathedral he regarded as "an unfinished monument of Gothic Superstition and Wealth," and after reposing during the heat of the summer months at Florence, he "approached and entered the Eternal City," where he was to receive the inspiration which suggested the great work of his life. After a short stay at Venice, which gave him "some hours of astonishment, and some days of disgust," he returned to England in June, 1765. He had been absent for two years and a half.

The five years which intervened between Gibbon's second return from abroad and his father's death in 1770 were the portion of his life which he "passed with the least enjoyment, and which he remembered with the least satisfaction." Whether he was by himself in London or with his father in Hampshire, he was continually oppressed by his father's increasing embarrassments and the consciousness of his own insufficient resources. In London he was soon "ballotted into Boodle's (that school of virtue, as the Earl of Shelburne had first named it)," where he found "the daily resource of excellent dinners, mixed company and moderate play." He owned, however, "with

[1] Mlle. Curchod was still unmarried. But Gibbon, writing to his stepmother, said, "I should like extremely to pass the winter here, if my Father would give me leave. Give me leave to add for I am sensible you may have suspicions) that no woman is the least concerned in my desire, and that as to any old inclinations, they are so far from subsisting that no one can be more opposite to them at present than myself. This I assure you of upon my word of honour. I hope after that I need say nothing more."

a blush, that [his] virtues of temperance and sobriety had not completely recovered themselves from the wounds of the Militia, that [his] connections were much less among women than men, and that these men, though far from contemptible in rank and fortune, were not of the first eminence in the literary or political world." In this period, indeed, he attempted one considerable work, the history of Switzerland, devoting the best part of three years to its preparation and composition. Like his previous essay, the history was written in French, in a style which, Gibbon himself thought, "above prose and below poetry, degenerated into a verbose and turgid declamation." The first book was submitted to a literary society of foreigners in London; their verdict was unfavourable. Gibbon listened to their strictures and committed his MSS. to the flames.

But this unhappy period of uncertainty and failure was rapidly coming to an end. In November, 1770, Gibbon lost his father; and, though he only succeeded to the wreck of what had once been a considerable fortune, he was thenceforward in enjoyment of an income usually sufficient for his moderate wants, and of an independence which he valued more than his income. In his own words, "the clear untainted remains of my patrimony have been always sufficient to support the rank of a gentleman, and to satisfy the wants of a philosopher." What he himself called "the golden mediocrity of [his] fortune" continued to fortify his application. He added :—

"Few books of merit and importance have been composed either in a garret or a palace. A gentleman possessed of leisure and competency may be encouraged by the assurance of an honourable reward; but wretched is the writer and wretched will be the work, where daily diligence is stimulated by daily hunger."

Yet Gibbon must have known Goldsmith, and must presumably have read the *Vicar of Wakefield.*

In the beginning of 1773 Gibbon removed himself and his books into a house in Bentinck Street, which he describes as absolutely the best house in London, and which became his home for the succeeding ten years.[1] These years form the fullest, happiest, and most useful period of Gibbon's life.

In fact, so soon as he was settled in his own home Gibbon threw himself into the composition of the great work which has made his name immortal. In this essay, in which we have endeavoured to dwell on the new material which is for the first time at our disposal, we shall not repeat the well-known description which he has given of his labours. It will be sufficient to say that the first volume, after having been refused by one publisher, appeared in 1776, and that it was followed in 1781 by the second and third volumes of the quarto edition—bringing the narrative down to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. The success of the work was immediate; its merits were at once appreciated, and Gibbon became one of the most prominent men of his time.

Success naturally enlarged his social acquaintance. He soon became intimate with all that was worth knowing in politics, literature, and society. He was elected to Brooks's and White's, and in 1774 became a member of "The Club" —the Literary Club, as it was then called—which had been founded by Reynolds and Johnson ten years previously, which still continues the most famous of the dining societies of London, and which, in the 142 years of its existence, has perhaps seen at its tables more men of note than any other society. Gibbon himself suggested

[1] Bentinck Street was much further removed, it should be recollected, from the bustle and smoke of London than it is now. It is, perhaps, worth adding that in 1781 Gibbon thought of moving from Bentinck Street to Harley Street, and that he describes the latter as "somewhat further in the Country than" Bentinck Street.

the form in which the election of a new member was to be communicated to him :—

"SIR,—I have the pleasure to inform you that you had last night the honour to be elected a member of THE CLUB.

"I have, &c."

And this form has been invariably used to the present time.

Other duties were concurrently occupying the historian's time. Gibbon's aunt, Catherine Gibbon, had married a Captain Elliston ; and their only daughter and heiress, Gibbon's cousin, became the wife of Mr. Eliot, the heir of Lord Eliot of Port Eliot. At the general election of 1774 Gibbon, through Lord Eliot's influence, became member for Liskeard.[1] He continued to represent that borough till the general election of 1781, when, by Lord North's influence, he was returned for Lymington. In Parliament he never broke an habitual silence ; though he supported Lord North, he took no interest in the politics of the day. Immersed in the studies of the past, he paid only an imperfect attention to the affairs of the present.

His own position, however, in the world of letters, and Lord North's friendship, procured him in 1778 the comfortable position of a Lordship of Trade ; and he enjoyed the income of the office for a period of three years, when it was destroyed on the accession of a new Ministry, in

[1] Gibbon paid Lord Eliot a visit in the preceding autumn, and he wrote to Holroyd :—"Our civil Landlord possesses neither a pack of hounds, nor a stable of running horses, nor a large farm, nor a good Library. *One possession he has, indeed, most truly desirable : but I much fear that the Danae of St. Germains has no particular inclination for me, and that the interested strumpet will yield only to a golden shower.*" Our italics show, as usual, the words which Lord Sheffield rejected. It is fair to add that "the interested strumpet" was the constituency, and not a Lady.

accordance with the programme of Economical Reform which Burke had propounded. On the formation of the Coalition Ministry, in 1783, he entertained some hopes that Lord North's interest might procure him some further advancement. He was disappointed. He found that he had insensibly increased his expenses by his seat in Parliament and by the temptations of an official income. He had neither the inclination nor, perhaps, the courage to retrench, and he decided to leave England, and to retire to his old retreat on the banks of Lake Leman.

His philosophic temperament was easily reconciled to the new change in his circumstances. He had, perhaps, never thoroughly enjoyed the noise and bustle of a great capital, the "fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ." "A few friends and a great many books may entertain me, but I think fifteen hundred people the worst company in the world." His home in Bentinck Street, which he had described in 1773 as "absolutely the best house in London," was regarded in 1784 as "a small house between a Street and a Stable Yard." Instead of it, he "began to occupy a spacious and convenient Mansion, connected on the North side with the City (of Lausanne) and open on the South to a beautiful and boundless horizon." He shared its possession with M. Deyverdun, whose acquaintance he had made during his earliest residence in Switzerland, and who had ever since continued one of his closest friends.

"I enjoyed at every meal, at every hour, the free and pleasant conversation of the friend of my youth, and my daily table was always provided for the reception of one or two extraordinary guests. Our importance in Society is less a positive than a relative weight; in London I was lost in the crowd; I ranked with the first families of Lausanne, and my style of prudent expence enabled me to maintain a fair balance of reciprocal civilities."

Most men, even should they attain the distinction of a Gibbon, think that the chief charm of society in London is derived from their intercourse with men and women whose intellects are superior, or at least equal, to their own. Gibbon, apparently, as he grew older preferred the solitary eminence which his fame secured him in a smaller circle. He would hardly have admitted that it was "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." But he evidently thought that it was preferable to be an acknowledged leader in Lausanne than to be merged in a crowd in London.

Gibbon had already written the greater portion of the fourth volume of his History before he left London. He completed the whole work in the ensuing years; and in the summer of 1787 again returned to England to arrange for its publication. The final publication was purposely delayed "that it might coincide with the fifty-first anniversary of [his] birthday;" and the historian was thus detained in England for the better part of a year. He passed most of that time with Lord Sheffield either in London or in Sussex—dining, when he was in London (as the Records of the Society still show), constantly with the Club—or in paying visits to his stepmother in Bath.

"In the larger circle of the Metropolis, I observed the country and the inhabitants, with the knowledge, and without the prejudices, of an Englishman; but I rejoyced in the apparent increase of wealth and prosperity which might be fairly divided between the spirit of the nation and the wisdom of the Minister. All party resentment was now lost in oblivion: since I was no man's rival, no man was my enemy: I felt the dignity of independence, and, as I asked no more, I was satisfied with the general civilities of the World."

We may reasonably hope, from these stately sentences, that, on the occasion of his last stay of any duration in England, Gibbon found that there was something good

in London as well as at Lausanne; and that even the "fumus strepitusque Romæ" have their compensations in the society of men of mark and leading.

With the publication of the last volume of his History, in 1788, the interest in Gibbon's life largely terminates. His work was done, and his remaining years were spent in comparative leisure at Lausanne. He had the misfortune in 1789 to lose his early friend, M. Deyverdun. But his place was partly supplied by the "solid and tender friendship of a respectable family [the de Severys]."

"The four persons of whom it is composed are all endowed with the virtues best adapted to their age and situation: and I am encouraged to love the parents as a brother, and the children as a father." [1]

The outbreak of the French Revolution increased his society:—

"A swarm of emigrants of both sexes, who escaped from the public ruin, has been attracted by the vicinity, the manners, and the language of Lausanne, and our narrow habitations in town and country are now occupied by the first names and titles of the departed Monarchy."

There Miss Holroyd paid Gibbon the visit to which we have already alluded in the summer of 1791. She was charmed with the beauty of the situation, which she admitted far exceeded her expectations. But—

"I own my surprise is very great, that Mr. Gibbon should choose to spend his days here in preference to England, for there does not appear to me anybody, with whom he can converse on equal terms, or who is

[1] Miss Holroyd wrote of the de Severys:—"We had the honour and pleasure of dining and spending the evening at Mons. de Severy's. Madame de Severy is called Mont Blanc, and I cannot give you a better Idea of her. I feel more inclination to admire and respect that family than to love them. There is a great deal of dignity and frigidity in their composition, which is much increased by Mr. Gibbon's attentions. He dotes upon them. They are called 'Gibbon's adopted.'"

worthy to hear him: but it is a proof how much pleasure Flattery gives the most sensible people. This is the only advantage this place can have over England for him."

Gibbon lived almost entirely in Swiss society:—

"Mr. Gibbon [wrote Miss Holroyd] dislikes the French very much, which is nothing but Swiss prejudice, of which he has imbibed a large quantity."

Miss Holroyd herself did not share this opinion. She wrote:—

"I do not wonder that the Swiss are not partial to the French, for they certainly cannot stand the comparison. It is not a fair one without doubt, as the French we have here are the flower of the French Court, and very pleasing and elegant they are. Of the Swiss there seems to be but one opinion: they certainly do not possess 'Les Graces.'"

One grace, however, they had in abundance:—

"Lally is a companion that would not suit Mr. Gibbon constantly, as he does not much like playing a second part. Vivent les Suisses for that! who, when the 'King of the place,' as he is called, opens his mouth (which, you know, he generally does some time before he has arranged his sentence) all wait in awful and respectful silence for what shall follow, and look up to it as an Oracle."

In this society, however, Gibbon passed his remaining years happily and contentedly. He acknowledged in one of the last pages that he wrote that his lot had been enviable:—

"The double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honourable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. . . . I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to action: some mischievous habits and appetites have, perhaps, been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study,

a passion which derives fresh vigour from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure. The original soil has been highly improved by labour and manure. . . . These enjoyments would be tasteless and bitter if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. *By the painful method of amputation* [our italics again indicate a passage which Lord Sheffield omitted] *my father's debts have been compleatly discharged: the labour of my pen, the sale of lands, the inheritance of a maiden aunt, have improved my property, and it will be exonerated on some melancholy day from the payment of Mrs. Gibbon's jointure.* According to the scale of Switzerland, I am a rich man; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expence, and my expence is equal to my wishes. . . . The present is a fleeting moment: the past is no more: and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may possibly be my last: but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow me about fifteen years."

It was not, however, to be. Symptoms of the disease to which he was ultimately to succumb had long been visible. While he was a comparatively young man "a horrid monster, ycleped the gout," paid him a short visit. In 1791 he acknowledged that he had suffered from seven or eight different attacks; that each attack had increased in duration and intensity, and had left him with less strength and agility than before. He had probably an hereditary tendency to the disease, since his father had died of dropsy. But we have his own testimony that "the daily practice of hard and even excessive drinking," during his career in the Militia, had sown the seeds of gout in his constitution. With increasing age, indeed, Gibbon became more prudent. But to the last day of his life he was fond of madeira, and with advancing years

he displayed an increasing indisposition to take exercise. A great English Minister once said to one of his colleagues, "I am afraid that you do not take exercise enough, or eat and drink more than enough. One of the two may do, but not both together." No one, unluckily, gave similar advice to Gibbon. He himself neglected the warnings of approaching illness. At last, on a final visit which he paid to England in 1793, he was taken seriously ill at Lord Sheffield's Sussex house. He was brought to London for medical advice, and temporarily relieved by being tapped. But the operation only secured him a short respite. He became gradually worse, and at last died in January, 1794, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

We have endeavoured briefly to re-tell the old story of Gibbon's life with the help of the new material which has lately become accessible. It must be recollected that in doing so we have an advantage which a biographer does not usually enjoy. We know Gibbon as we know few of his contemporaries, because he has himself supplied us with the necessary analysis of his character. What Boswell did for Johnson, Gibbon did even more effectually for himself. He dissected his own character and gave us his portrait, painted without any attempt to efface either its strength or its weakness; and this portrait enables us to gauge the value of the verdicts which contemporary men of mark passed on the historian. Horace Walpole, for instance, thought him vain; Boswell, who disliked him, declared that he did not dare trust himself in argument with Johnson; Burke thought Gibbon's style affected, "mere frippery and tinsel"; Madame du Deffand shared Burke's opinion, and thought the "Decline and Fall" declamatory and oratorical; and Mackintosh declared that Gibbon might have been taken from a corner of Burke's mind without ever being missed. Even in later times

Gibbon's excellent biographer, Mr. Cotter Morrison, quotes with approval Porson's saying of him: "We are too often reminded of that great man, Mr. Prig, the auctioneer, whose manner was so inimitably fine that he had as much to say on a ribbon as on a Raphael." While of his political career he says in another passage that it was altogether commonplace and unworthy of him.

That there is some truth in these various verdicts we do not deny. That Gibbon, for example, was vain, there can be little doubt. His vanity was not only the vanity of success; he had the vanity of a fine gentleman. He liked to drive about Paris, "decked out in silks and silver," with two footmen in handsome liveries behind his coach. He liked also the appreciation or the admiration which he received from the de Severys and the other Swiss at Lausanne. That he was also incapable of withstanding Johnson we are equally prepared to admit. The same diffidence, in fact, which made him a silent member in the Commons prevented his joining in the rough and ready arguments in which Johnson delighted. "His conversation," wrote Sir J. Bland Burgess in a well-known passage, "was not what Dr. Johnson would have called talk. There was no interchange of ideas, for no one had a chance of replying: so fugitive, so variable, was his mode of discoursing, which consisted of points, anecdotes and epigrammatic thrusts, all more or less to the purpose, and all pleasantly said with a French air and manner, which gave them great piquancy, but which were withal so desultory and unconnected that the attention of his auditors sometimes flagged before his own resources were exhausted." A talker of this kind had no chance with Johnson, and may have seemed immeasurably inferior in intellect to Burke. That his political career was not remarkable we must also concede to Mr. Morrison. Gibbon described himself at one time as "an Englishman, a philosopher

and a Whig," but it would be much more true to say of him that he was a citizen of the world, and that his philosophy was always superior to the claims of party.

It is, however, precisely because Gibbon was not perfect that so much interest attaches to his personality. Thanks to his own memoirs and letters, he has come down to us not as some lay figure converted by biography into an ideal hero, but as a man of exceptional power, furnished with admirable qualities and endowed also with what an American novelist has called the "redeeming vices" that add so much interest to character. And thus we see and know Gibbon as we see and know few of his contemporaries. We see the student poring over his books, diligently striving to master difficult and disputed passages with the aid of the best commentators, elaborately analysing what he reads, and pondering over his analysis. We see the philosopher abruptly interrupting his too short walk either at Buriton or Lausanne to sit upon some convenient bench and meditate on what he had read, or on the kindred thoughts to which his reading had conducted him. We see the captain of grenadiers drinking late at night with the brother-officers whose society he despised, but practically obtaining the virtual command of his regiment by the force of his ability. We see the fine gentleman at Brooks's or in Paris, dressed, rather too elaborately, in silk or velvet, with his quaint little body bent forward, and his forefinger stretched out, pursing up his little mouth, rapping his snuff-box, pouring out his rich stores of knowledge in rather diffuse conversation, and shrinking from the rougher talk of Johnson or the closely-worded argument of Pitt. In some respects, no doubt, his character contradicted itself; at any rate, he had qualities which are not usually associated in the same man. A hard student, yet a fine gentleman; economical in great

matters, yet extravagant in small things; a son who gave his duty to his father, and reserved his affection for his stepmother; a cold lover, but a warm friend; a partisan in past history, a philosopher in present politics; an Englishman whose regard for humanity moderated his love for his own country. Such was Gibbon as a man; we have still something to add of him as an historian.

At the present time it is hardly necessary to insist on Gibbon's great merits as an historian. His work has already endured for more than a century; later inquiries may have enlarged our knowledge, but they have not shaken him from his pre-eminence. His reputation, great in his own lifetime, has grown in the generations which have passed away since his death; and he ranks, almost beyond dispute, and almost without a competitor, as the greatest master of history who has written in the English tongue. But his fame as an historian is not confined to our own country. Almost alone among the moderns, he challenges comparison with the great ancients. We have ourselves been twice present at a discussion when some highly competent critics attempted to select the six great historians of the world. Two Grecians—Thucydides and Herodotus—were unanimously placed among the six; two Romans—Tacitus and Livy—were with more hesitation added to the number. The same honour was awarded to Gibbon. But on each occasion differences of opinion were expressed as to whom the sixth place should be assigned.

The first thing perhaps, which impresses us in Gibbon is the extent of the ground which he covers. Herodotus, though he launches into many dissertations about nations and countries, only contemplated writing, and hardly succeeded in concluding, the history of the Persian War. The immortal work of Thucydides, which he did not live to complete, was only intended to cover the period of the

Peloponnesian War. The "Annals" and "History" of Tacitus do not extend over a hundred years. Livy addressed himself to a larger task, and actually completed the history of Rome from the legendary period of antiquity to the eve of the Christian era. But the earlier books, which are among those which have come down to us, are necessarily written with little detail. The task to which Gibbon addressed himself was, however, even greater than this. He undertook to write the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire from the age of Hadrian to the fall of Constantinople. His work, therefore, deals with the whole history of the known world for a period of thirteen centuries—a period which witnessed, not only the destruction of the ancient world, but the reconstruction of modern Europe; and whose history until Gibbon began to write was to a great extent unknown to English readers.

Large as the task was to which Gibbon addressed himself, no man ever approached a considerable work with ampler preparation for it. His studies from his earliest manhood had tended to equip him with the requisite information. Before he was nineteen he wrote in his journal :—

"I determined to read over the Latin authors in order, and read this year Virgil, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Justin, Florus, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius."

He says of the same time in his Autobiography :—

"After finishing this great author [Cicero], I formed a more extensive plan of reviewing the Latin classics under the four divisions of (1) Historians, (2) Poets, (3) Orators, and (4) Philosophers, from the days of Plautus and Sallust to the decline of the language and empire of Rome: and this plan in the last twenty-seven months of my residence at Lausanne I nearly accomplished. Nor was this review, however rapid, either hasty or superficial. I

indulged myself in a second, and even a third, perusal of Terence, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, &c., and studied to imbibe the sense and spirit most congenial to my own. I never suffered a difficult or corrupt passage to escape till I had viewed it in every light of which it was susceptible; though often disappointed, I always consulted the most learned or ingenious commentators . . . and, in the ardour of my inquiries, I embraced a large circle of historical and critical erudition. My abstracts of each book were made in the French language: my observations often branched into particular essays: and I can still read without contempt a dissertation of eight folio pages on eight lines (287–294) of the fourth Georgic of Virgil."

Before, then, Gibbon began to write, before he even contemplated his History, his mind was saturated with the whole literature of his subject. Like Macaulay, he had read everything, and had assimilated all that he had read. And the thoroughness of his preparation, which few moderns have excelled, was the more remarkable from the age in which he lived. The ideas of history which were accepted in the latter half of the eighteenth century were very different from those which prevail now. The extensive knowledge and the minute research which we expect to-day were not required in the age of Hume and Robertson. A capacity to delineate character or to relate a story was supposed to be more important than accurate and detailed inquiry into facts. The historian had almost forgotten that the Greek word to which he owes his name does not mean to tell, but to inquire.

In reading Gibbon, moreover, we are struck not merely with his extensive knowledge of his own period, but with his acquaintance with universal history. We know from his Autobiography that his study of the greatest Roman authors was followed by an equally comprehensive examination of the Greek classics. The "Decline and Fall" is

full of allusions which prove his minute acquaintance with modern history. Professor Bury, indeed, infers from a celebrated passage that "the gap in his knowledge of ancient history was the period of the Diadochi and Epigoni. If he had been familiar with that period, he would not have said that Diocletian was the first to give to the world the example of a resignation of sovereignty." But the remark seems to us essentially the observation of a critic rather than of a writer. Any man who has written much knows how easily slips of this kind creep into the most careful compositions. And, in our judgment, it would be as unfair to condemn Gibbon as ignorant because he had temporarily forgotten the resignation of Ptolemy Soter as it would be to accuse Macaulay of an incapacity to appreciate fiction because he had once, through a slip of the pen in a famous essay, declared that it would be unjust to estimate Goldsmith by the "Vicar of Wakefield."

History has been defined as philosophy teaching by examples; and of no modern historian is the saying so true as it is of Gibbon. He surveys the march of events from the standpoint of a philosopher. His sympathies and antipathies are indeed strong, and occasionally betray him into expressions which have not commanded universal approval. His attitude towards religion colours his account of the progress of Christianity and of the career of Julian. But, though his language occasionally displays the warmth of an advocate, his main conclusions are almost always formed with the impartiality of a judge. He does not, like the greatest of modern historians, measure the events of a previous age by the Whig principles of 1832; and he is free from the reproach which attaches to a voluminous writer, that he has proved in twenty volumes that Providence was on the side of the Tories. His impartiality has obtained the reward that his conclusions in the main have

been undisturbed by later research and later criticism. As Mr. Freeman said, "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

Every great writer produces a style of his own. Gibbon's sonorous sentences have characteristics about them which it is impossible to mistake. The stately march of his narrative advances without interruption from the first to the last page of his great work. We are sometimes inclined to think, indeed, that his style is too ornate, or, at any rate, too uniform. We miss the emphasis which other writers succeed in imparting to their narrative by modulating their style to the varied necessities of their subject. We wish, in other words, that Gibbon would occasionally take off his Court dress, and appear before us in ordinary attire. But with Gibbon the wish is never fulfilled. The meanest and most important events are portrayed in the same tone; and a ridiculous incident, like the coronation of Sapor before his birth, is related in the same stately language with which the march of Julian is described.

These, however, are minor criticisms. It is much more important to dwell on the excellences of the work as a whole; and the first reflection which impresses itself upon us is the completeness of the story. Gibbon realised, as few other historians have realised, that thirteen centuries of the world could be blended into one drama, and made to illustrate one idea. The idea, of course, was the government of the whole civilised world by one ruler and one law. The drama was the tragedy which witnessed the destruction of the idea. Just as Mr. Bryce has taught us to realise that the empire which Charlemagne established and which Napoleon destroyed was the legitimate successor of the empire which Cæsar originated and which the Turks overthrew, so Gibbon has taught us that the decrepit Empire of the East was a continuation of the once vigorous

Empire of the West, and that, whether the central scene be shifted from Rome to Milan, to Nicomedia or to Constantinople, we are contemplating the same drama, and studying the same history. And the story not only brings home to us the unity of the period, it is concerned with one of the longest and most important episodes in the history of mankind. It relates the conclusion of ancient history; for, notwithstanding all that has been written in our own time, we are still impressed with the belief that the instinct of our ancestors was right in dividing the history of the world into two great periods. Ancient history is the history of a world in which the Mediterranean was still the centre of the earth. Modern history is the history of the nations who have peopled a larger world, who have crossed the Atlantic and rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

If, in reading Gibbon, we are impressed with the completeness of his narrative, we are also struck with the limits which he voluntarily imposed on himself. His central idea is accurately expressed by his title. He is writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Empire; he is not attempting to describe, in anything like the same detail, the contemporary narrative which deals with the reconstruction of modern Europe. He himself divided his work into three great periods. The first, which is told in most detail, is traced from the age of "the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and [extends] to the subversion of the Western Empire by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe." The second commences with the reign of Justinian, and concludes with the establishment by Charlemagne of the Second or German Empire of the West. The third extends from the formation of the German

Empire to "the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of Princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans had been long since forgotten." These periods are, of course, unequal in duration. Three centuries elapsed from the accession of Commodus, with which the narrative commences, to the birth of Justinian. Rather less than three centuries passed from the accession of Justinian to the elevation of Charlemagne. But the last of the three periods covers six centuries and a half.

The three periods are, of course, described in very unequal length. In the octavo edition the first of them is related in six volumes, containing thirty-eight chapters. Three volumes, comprising thirteen long chapters, deal with the second. The third is compressed into three volumes, containing, however, twenty chapters. It is evident, therefore, that the author, as he proceeded with his work, deliberately abridged his narrative. If, indeed, the nine centuries which intervened between the taking of Rome and the capture of Constantinople had been described at the length which is devoted to the first four centuries, the History—it is obvious—would have extended to twenty-four volumes.

It is, perhaps, partly owing to their compression that the later volumes are, on the whole, the least satisfactory portion of the work. The narrative is too concise to make an adequate impression on the memory; and though some brilliant chapters, like that in which the siege of Constantinople is related, will be recollected by all those who have read them, the story as a whole hardly satisfies the student or sustains the interest of the reader. But the deficiencies which we think we notice in the latter portion of this great work are not due either to haste or to care-

lessness on the part of the author. It was simply impossible for any one, a hundred years ago, to deal with this portion of his task as adequately as Gibbon has dealt with the preceding centuries. The knowledge of the world, and the materials at the disposal of the most diligent inquirer, made complete success unobtainable; and the fair critic, instead of complaining that here and there Gibbon failed, will be much more disposed to marvel at what he accomplished.

The imperfection of the materials at Gibbon's disposal not merely induced him, in his later volumes, to give only a superficial account of events which required a more exhaustive treatment; it also betrayed him into an inaccurate conception of the work of the later Empire. Professor Bury, indeed, in his introduction to the latest edition of the "Decline and Fall," goes so far as to write that Gibbon had not "any conception of the great ability of most of the Emperors from Leo the Isaurian to Basil II., or, we might say, to Constantine, the conqueror of Armenia. The designation of the story of the later Empire as a 'uniform tale of weakness and misery' is one of the most untrue and most effective judgments ever uttered by a thoughtful historian. Before the outrage of 1204 the Empire was the bulwark of the West." The view which Professor Bury thus maintains was first made possible by the inquiries which Mr. Finlay instituted, and which resulted in his "History of Greece." German, French, and Greek scholars have since laboured in the same field, and the services of the Second Empire to Europe have been made familiar to English readers by Mr. Freeman and Mr. Oman. Nor is it merely in his account of the Second Empire that Gibbon has been practically superseded by later investigators. English readers have learned to correct Gibbon's account of the Rise of Christianity with Dean Milman's great work; the

story of the Invaders of Italy has been retold in our own time by Mr. Hodgkin. Later research has superseded much that Gibbon wrote about Justinian. Though his forty-first chapter, in Professor Bury's language, is still "admired by jurists as a brief and brilliant exposition of the principles of Roman law, . . . a series of foreign scholars has elaborated the study of the science in the present century." Mommsen, who has been one of the chief labourers in this field, has also enlarged our knowledge of "the constitution and history of the Principate and the provincial government of the early Emperors," while the history of the Slavonic people, which Gibbon almost entirely neglected, has gradually assumed distinctness, and is constantly acquiring fresh interest and importance.

These deficiencies, if deficiencies they may fairly be called, are chiefly due to the state of available knowledge at the time when Gibbon wrote. But they are also partly accounted for by the limits which he imposed on himself. He addressed himself to the task of writing the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. He did not attempt to describe, except incidentally, the contemporary history of the Reconstruction of Modern Europe. That work, if it is ever accomplished, will require a writer endowed with even more than Gibbon's knowledge and industry; yet it will almost exactly cover the period which Gibbon described. For, if the History of the Ancient World gradually draws to a close during the fourteen centuries and a half which followed the reign of Augustus, the History of Modern Europe commences in the same reign. It had its origin in the forests of Germany; its first decisive event is the defeat of the Romans under Varus, while the same generation which witnessed the fall of Constantinople in the East saw the retirement of the English from France, the union of the Spanish Monarchy

the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the termination of civil war in England, and, finally, the discovery of America. Just as up to the middle of the fifteenth century we may survey with Gibbon the Decline and Fall of the Ancient World, so from the middle of the same century we are face to face with the reconstructed Europe whose main features are still familiar to us.

With the story of this reconstruction Gibbon had only incidentally to deal. The story of the Decline and Fall of one system could not embrace a full narrative of the rise and expansion of another. We learn more in a few pages from M. Guizot of the great forces which have produced our Europe of to-day than from all which Gibbon wrote. Yet this circumstance does not detract from Gibbon's great merits. If we may quote Professor Bury once more:

"That Gibbon is behind date in many details, and in some departments of importance, simply signifies that we and our fathers have not lived in an absolutely incompetent world. But in the main things he is still our master, above and beyond 'date.' It is needless to dwell on the obvious qualities which secure to him immunity from the common lot of historical writers—such as the bold and certain measure of his progress through the ages; his accurate vision, and his tact in managing perspective; his discreet reserves of judgment and timely scepticism; the immortal affectation of his unique manner. By virtue of these superiorities he can defy the danger with which the activity of successors must always threaten the worthies of the past."

Let us add to these just reflections that Gibbon realised, as no other great historian has realised, that thirteen centuries of the world's history constituted one great drama; that, though the scenes might shift from Europe to Asia, and from Asia to Africa, one continuous thread

could connect the whole story ; and that his conception of this idea is realised in its execution. His narrative, like some stately river, is replenished by many tributaries, it separates into many channels. But the regularity of its course is uninterrupted either by the accumulated waters which it receives or the losses which it sustains. Like some great tropical current, it shrinks in volume as it approaches its final goal, and is ultimately lost in the desert which has replaced some of the fairest provinces of the Eastern Empire.

PRINCE BISMARCK

TWO men, during the last half of the nineteenth century, achieved the highest reputations as statesmen from their abilities and from their achievements. Both of them were sprung from families of position, both served for a short time in the armies of their respective countries, both in their younger years occupied themselves with the management of their paternal estates, and obtained their first successes in agricultural pursuits ; both were animated from the outset by a desire to effect the union and the independence of the race to which they belonged ; both were ready to sacrifice everything to this object ; both, in pursuit of it, displayed abilities of the highest order, courage which never failed, and an iron will which overcame all opposition. Finally, both achieved a success which far exceeded their own anticipations, for one of them—Count Cavour—changed the face of southern Europe by the creation of a united Italy ; the other—Prince Bismarck—effected a greater alteration in northern Europe by the constitution of the German Empire.

If, however, there is much in these two men which naturally suggests comparison, there is much also which permits of contrast. In the first place, in carrying out his policy, Cavour always showed that he was an Italian first and a Piedmontese afterwards. He never hesitated to sacrifice the interests of his own country to those of his race. Bismarck, on the contrary, never forgot that he was

a Prussian. From first to last he thought and maintained that the union and independence of Germany were to be worked out through the aggrandisement of Prussia. In the next place, while Cavour was essentially the parliamentary statesman who admired and imitated Peel's conduct and policy, who tried to work by constitutional methods, and who never felt so strong as when the Legislature was at his back, Bismarck was the autocratic representative of an autocratic sovereign. The cause which he set out to win had, in his judgment, to be won by force. If the Legislature happened to agree with him, so much the better—for himself; if it differed from him, so much the worse—for the Legislature. He did not hesitate, over and over again, to force the hands of his sovereign, in whose rights he believed; he had much less scruple in ignoring the wishes of a Legislature which could claim no right divine to govern wrong.

In one other respect these two great men afford a sharp contrast. Cavour was struck down by death in the maturity of his powers, before the work which he accomplished was crowned by the cession of Venetia and the transfer of the Italian capital to Rome. Bismarck, on the contrary, survived his great victory by nearly twenty-eight years. During much of this time he remained the chief Minister of Germany and the foremost statesman of the world. The services which he then rendered to his country were, in one sense, quite as great as those which he gave her in the hour of her trial and of her victory. The conclusion of the Triple Alliance was, in its way, almost as remarkable an achievement as the formation of the German Empire.

Of Cavour we already know nearly all that we are ever likely to learn. Of Bismarck we are gradually acquiring equally full knowledge. The publication of his own "Reminiscences" and of Dr. Busch's "Revelations" has

undoubtedly increased our acquaintance with the great Chancellor. In reading, indeed, Bismarck's own reminiscences, which have been translated with excellent skill by Mr. Butler, we are conscious of the feeling that the author, perhaps naturally enough, is not telling the whole story, but only that portion or version of it which he wishes us to know. Dr. Moritz Busch, on the contrary, writing with the indiscretion, but without the humour, of a Boswell, has revealed a great deal which his hero certainly would not have wished published. But his discursive and disconnected narrative fails to supply us with a complete picture either of the man or of his policy. Those who wish to go deeper into the subject must, however, concurrently address themselves to other works which have appeared, and are appearing, both in Germany and in other countries. In France, especially, capable historians and well-informed writers have been investigating, and are still commenting on, the events which led to the fall of the Second Empire. Their researches, of which we have freely availed ourselves, have largely added to our knowledge both of the man and of the time.

Otto von Bismarck was born at Schönhausen, in Brandenburg, on April 1, 1815. He was sprung from an old family. He said once of the Hohenzollerns, "They are a Suabian family, no better than my own, and, if there is no divine commandment, no concern of mine." He was educated at the Plahmann Institute at Berlin, where "the *régime* was artificially Spartan," and afterwards at Göttingen, where it is strange to find he was "as thin as a knitting-needle," and where, he tells us himself, he fought twenty-eight students' duels in three terms. After leaving the University he filled one or two minor appointments in the Prussian Civil Service, and passed a short time in the army. Civil and military duties, however, proved equally tedious to him; and, readily complying in 1839 with his

father's desire that he should take up the management of the family estates in Pomerania, he made up his mind "to live and die in the country." The life that he led there must have made most people think that he was more likely to die than live. It gained for him the nickname of "Mad Bismarck." "The young frauleins and their mothers and cousins at the neighbouring country seats shuddered, while their fathers and uncles shook their heads, as they heard of extravagant drinking bouts, of floods of champagne and porter mixed in 'war bowls,' of furious rides, as if the Wild Huntsman were tearing past, of the routing up of guests by pistol-shots in the middle of the night, and of all kinds of mischief and wantonness perpetrated in audacious mockery of traditional usage." But Bismarck bore a charmed life. He said in 1870 that he believed that he was within the mark in saying that he had fallen from horseback fifty times. Happily, perhaps, for him he found that country pursuits, diversified with mad frolics, were insufficient to absorb his entire energy. In 1847 he became an active member of the first Prussian Parliament, in which he distinguished himself by an uncompromising defence of the rights of the Crown. In the same year he took a more important step in marrying Johanna von Putkamer. Her influence had a marked effect on his character. "You cannot imagine," he wrote, "what that woman has made of me."

The story goes that, on his wedding tour, at Venice, Bismarck made the acquaintance of his sovereign, Frederick William IV. The King gave a warm reception to "the young country nobleman, who had strenuously defended the rights of the throne in Parliament," and Bismarck thenceforward stood high in royal favour, and was rapidly promoted to positions of importance. In 1851 he was sent to Frankfort as envoy to the Diet; in 1852 he was promoted, during Count Arnim's illness, to the

"Diplomatic High School," at Vienna; on Count Arnim's recovery he returned to Frankfort, where he remained till 1859; early in that year he was transferred, against his own wish, to St. Petersburg, and in 1862 he was sent to Paris. The King's high opinion of his abilities, which was marked by these successive appointments, was recorded, in 1852, in a letter to the Emperor of Austria:—

"Your Majesty," he wrote, "will thus make the acquaintance of a man who with us is honoured by many, and hated by some, because of his frank and chivalrous obedience, and his irreconcilable attitude towards the Revolution down to its roots. He is my friend and my loyal servant, and comes to Vienna with a fresh, lively, and sympathetic impress of my principles, my mode of action, my will, and, I may add, of my love towards Austria and your Majesty."

During these years of preparation Bismarck constantly displayed the qualities and opinions for which he was afterwards distinguished. He bitterly resented, in 1848, Frederick William IV.'s "softness" in recalling his troops from Berlin, instead of definitely crushing the Berlin rising. He approved, in 1849, the King's resolution to refuse the crown of Germany, which was offered to him at Frankfort; he disliked "the revolutionary or, at any rate, parliamentary source of the offer." He deplored, in 1850, the diplomatic defeat which Prussia sustained at Olmütz; but, at the request of the Government, whose representative assured him privately that the Prussian army was unprepared for war, he assisted to reconcile his party to the policy which he deplored. The task which he thus undertook, however, confirmed his opinion that it was the first duty of a Prussian statesman to provide the force which might enable his country to play a worthier part in the future. The military power of Prussia, he thought, must be strengthened both for internal and for external

reasons. For internal reasons: for the King should be free to act, and to assert his rights. For external reasons: for the voice of Prussia should be audible abroad; her authority should be felt in every part of Germany.

Two great wars in this period enabled Bismarck to explain the policy which he desired to pursue. In 1854, on the eve of the Crimean War, a treaty was concluded between Austria and Prussia by which Prussia pledged herself to concentrate 100,000 men, or, if necessary, 200,000 men—one-third of them in East Prussia and two-thirds of them at Posen and Breslau. It was the obvious object of this treaty to provide for the possible contingency of the German Powers joining the allies in the war. But Bismarck desired to use it as an expedient for raising Prussia out of a secondary position. He suggested to the King that, "when Austria should call upon us to bring up our troops," Prussia should at once move 100,000 men, or more, not to Posen or Breslau, but into Silesia—into a position whence they could "with equal facility step over the frontier of either Russia or Austria." France, he argued, absorbed in the Crimean War, was not in a position to threaten the western frontier; Austria had her available force "nailed fast" in Galicia by the presence of a Russian army in Poland; and Prussia could survive the effects of a British blockade of her Baltic ports. Thus, from her central position in Silesia, equally threatening to Russia and Austria, Prussia might exercise a commanding influence, and earn for herself a position worthy of her past. Bismarck himself tells us that the King rejected this suggestion as beyond his power: "My dear boy, that is all very fine, but it is too expensive for me. A man of Napoleon's kind can afford to make such master-strokes, but not I."

After the war, M. de Moustier—the French Ambassador at Berlin—complained to Bismarck of the selfish policy

of Prussia in holding aloof from the allies. "Cette politique," he said, with very little tact or taste, "va vous conduire à Jéna." Bismarck at once replied, "Pourquoi pas à Leipzig ou à Waterloo?" M. de Moustier did not live to see Sedan; but, as Foreign Minister of France in 1867, he must have had frequent occasion to recollect Bismarck's retort.

The same cynical indifference to the rights of the case itself, and the same desire to win something for Prussia out of the difficulties of other nations, characterised the policy which Bismarck desired to pursue during the Franco-Austrian War of 1859. The German people, furious at the defeat of a German Power, were longing to march to the defence of Austria; and, as a matter of fact, the hasty conclusion of peace at Villafranca alone prevented the extension of the war to the Rhine. But Bismarck, who at the time was Ambassador at St. Petersburg, took a wholly different view of the situation. "My idea"—so he wrote in his Memoirs—"was that we ought to prepare for war, but at the same time send an ultimatum to Austria either to accept our conditions in the German question, or to look out for our attack." Thus, Bismarck clearly saw that Austria's difficulty was Prussia's opportunity; he plainly thought it folly to help a rival in her extremity without, at any rate, obtaining solid recompense for the assistance.

In fact, if throughout this period Bismarck's domestic policy was inspired by a desire to increase the power of the Crown and to raise the strength of the army, his foreign policy was animated by a wish to regain the ground which had been lost at Olmütz, and to give Prussia the hegemony in Germany. This policy naturally brought him into collision, and at one time very nearly led to a duel, with Count Rechberg, the Austrian representative at Frankfort. How clearly, indeed, Bismarck

already saw the coming struggle between Austria and Prussia may be inferred from another anecdote. During the Crimean War Bismarck happened to be present in uniform, and wearing decorations which had been conferred upon him for his services at the Diet, at a review of Bavarian troops. An Austrian officer, covered with medals, rode up to him and, pointing to the orders which Bismarck was wearing, said, "Well, Excellency, all these gained in the face of the enemy?" "Certainly," retorted Bismarck, "in the face of the enemy here in Frankfort-on-Main."

During these years, in which Bismarck was gaining experience of men and affairs, and in which Frederick William IV., who regarded him as his "foster-son," was training him for positions of still greater responsibility, he had been frequently spoken of for high political office at Berlin. Frederick William IV., however, hesitated to select as his Minister a man whose outspoken language had made him unpopular with all parties, and who avowedly desired to break with the Revolution, and to govern by force. Bismarck—so the King wrote on a list of Ministers submitted to him—was "only to be employed when the bayonet governs unrestricted"; or, as another version of the same story runs, Bismarck was a "Red Reactionary, with a scent for blood, to be used later." Bismarck himself, indeed, gave another reason for his exclusion from office. "The King looked upon me as an egg which he had laid and hatched out himself, and in cases of difference of opinion would have always had the feeling that the egg wanted to be cleverer than the hen." He added that his own views of foreign policy did not altogether coincide with those of his sovereign, and that the difficulty of being at the same time an obedient and responsible Minister would have been greater under Frederick William IV. than it proved afterwards under the Emperor William.

Thus, during the reign of Frederick William IV., and during the regency of his brother—the future Emperor—Bismarck, whose experience and authority were constantly increasing, continued to occupy his successive embassies at Frankfort, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Paris. But, in 1862, internal difficulties in Prussia necessitated the appointment of the strongest possible Minister. The new King was impressed with the expediency of largely increasing the Prussian army, and the Chamber of Deputies year after year refused him the supplies which were necessary for the purpose. The King was so discouraged by these refusals that he told Bismarck, in September, 1862, that he would not reign if he could not govern in a manner which satisfied his conscience. "I cannot do that if I am to rule according to the will of the present majority in Parliament, and I can no longer find any Ministers prepared to conduct my Government without subjecting themselves and me to the parliamentary majority. I have, therefore, resolved to lay down my crown, and have already sketched out the proclamation of my abdication." Bismarck replied that his Majesty was aware that he was ready to enter the Ministry; that he was certain that General von Roon would remain at his side; and that he did not anticipate any difficulty in securing suitable colleagues. He assured the King that he was prepared in office to carry out the reorganisation of the army; and that he would persist in this policy in opposition to the majority in Parliament and its resolutions. He added, it is "not a question of Liberal or Conservative of this or that shade, but rather of monarchical rule or parliamentary government. In this situation I shall, even if your Majesty command me to do things which I do not consider right, tell you my opinion quite openly; but, if you finally persist in yours, I will rather perish with the King than forsake your Majesty in the contest with parliamentary government."

These bold opinions—which induced the King to refrain from his contemplated abdication and to continue the struggle—were not uttered without premeditation. A few days before his interview with his King in Berlin, Bismarck had discussed the situation with M. de Persigny in Paris. He had agreed with M. de Persigny that the proper course for a Prussian Minister was to resist the Chamber and disregard its decisions, holding the army ready for action. As the struggle turned on a point on which the army was interested, the Minister could rely on its support; and as, under the Prussian constitution, the rejection of a financial proposal by the Chamber did not mean a stoppage of supplies, but merely a reversion to the financial arrangements of the previous year, the Prussian Government would not be without means for continuing the contest.[1] It is remarkable that the Emperor and Empress, to whom this conversation was reported, blamed M. de Persigny for recommending a course which they thought dangerous to the Prussian Crown and calculated to provoke a convulsion in Germany.

Bismarck had not been many days in office before he had an opportunity of proving the zeal and boldness with which he was prepared to carry out his promise to support the King in his contest with the Chambers. His first speech aroused the attention of his own country and of Europe. "Prussia," so he argued, "could no longer wear unaided on its long narrow figure the panoply which Germany required for its security; that must be equally distributed over all German peoples. We should get no nearer the goal by speeches, associations, decisions of majorities: we should be unable to avoid a serious contest,

[1] M. de Persigny, *more suo*, declares that he gave this advice to Bismarck, and that Bismarck warmly approved it. Five years afterwards Bismarck said to him with a laugh, "Eh bien! n'ai-je pas bien suivi vos leçons?" and Persigny answered, "Oui, mais je dois reconnaître que l'élève a singulièrement surpassé le maître" ("Mémoires de Persigny," p. 288).

a contest which could only be settled by blood and iron. In order to secure our success in this, the deputies must place the greatest possible weight of blood and iron in the hands of the King of Prussia, in order that, according to his judgment, he might throw it into one scale or the other." A few days afterwards he announced the decision of the Government "to carry on the finance of the State without the conditions provided for in the constitution." "Conscious of its responsibility, it is equally conscious of the duties imposed on it by the country, and in this the Government finds its authority until it receives the legal confirmation to satisfy the expenses of the State, which are necessary for the development of the welfare of the country." The policy of blood and iron, in other words, was to be persisted in; and, whatever resolutions the legislature might pass, the blood and iron, without which Prussia could not work out the future of Germany, were at any cost to be provided.

Bismarck himself admits that his policy was received with great disfavour. "Some progressive journals hoped to see [him] picking oakum for the benefit of the State;" the House of Deputies, in February, 1863, declared by a large majority that Ministers were responsible with their persons and their fortunes for unconstitutional expenditure; and it was seriously suggested that, in order to avoid the confiscation of his estate, Bismarck should formally transfer it to his brother. The comic journals of Germany gave expression to the popular feeling. In one caricature, Bismarck is a ballet-dancer pirouetting over half-a-dozen eggs on which are written, Right, Law, Reform, Constitution, Franchise. In another he has cut his finger—his own finger, be it observed—with a knife. And the legend underneath the picture is "Blood and Iron." [1]

[1] Some similar caricatures are also mentioned by M. Benoist in his excellent appreciation of Bismarck, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

The King himself was thoroughly alarmed at the uncompromising manner in which his Minister was carrying out the promise which he had given. "I can perfectly well see where all this will end. Over there, in front of the Opera House, under my windows, they will cut off your head, and mine a little while afterwards." Bismarck quietly replied, "Et après, Sire?" "*Après*, indeed, we shall be dead," answered the King. "Yes," said the Minister, "then we shall be dead; but we must all die sooner or later, and can we perish more honourably? I, fighting for my King's cause, and your Majesty sealing with your own blood your rights as King by the grace of God. . . . Your Majesty is bound to fight, you cannot capitulate; you must, even at the risk of bodily danger, go forth to meet any attempt at coercion." The King, as Bismarck spoke, "grew more and more animated, and began to assume the part of an officer fighting for kingdom and fatherland." Thenceforward the Minister knew that he had only to appeal to his sovereign's strong sense of duty to convert hesitation and doubt into resolution and decision.

The contest with the Chamber over the Budget was complicated, in 1863, by a treaty made with Russia on the occasion of the Polish Rebellion. Bismarck, who cared very little about the Poles, but who cared a great deal to strengthen the hands of Prussia by a Russian alliance, concluded a military arrangement under which Russia was allowed to follow the insurgents into Prussian territory. The convention naturally aroused what Bismarck was pleased to call the "unintelligent" indignation of the Liberals in the Diet; and further increased the Minister's unpopularity. At that moment, however, attention was suddenly diverted from the Budget and from Poland to a question of more direct interest to Germany. For Frederick VII. of Denmark died on November 15, 1863,

and his death brought at once the Schleswig-Holstein question to an issue.

This question, which had occupied diplomacy for years, can only be stated very briefly here. The late King of Denmark, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein Glucksburg, was undoubtedly heir through a female line to the Danish throne. But, if no other arrangement had been made, the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein would have passed to a younger branch, which descended in the direct male line to the House of Augustenburg. In order, however, to provide against the division of Danish territory, it had been agreed at a conference in London, in 1850, that both duchies and kingdom should descend to Prince Christian of Glucksburg, and this arrangement had been embodied in a treaty, by which the integrity of the Danish monarchy had been maintained, but the rights of the German Confederation with respect to the duchies had been reserved. The Danes, however, more intent on consolidating the monarchy than on observing the conditions of this reservation, had placed the kingdom and the duchy of Schleswig under a common constitution. When, therefore, on the death of the King of Denmark in 1863, Prince Christian of Augustenburg claimed the duchies, the Germans were disposed to support his claim, and thus vindicate the right of Germany to German territory.

In the debates which took place on the subject in the Prussian Legislature, Bismarck resisted the almost unanimous desire of the Legislature to recognise Prince Christian of Augustenburg's claim. The Government, he argued, should reserve to itself "the decision as to the question if and when the Danish Government, through a nonfulfilment of their obligations, will put us into a position of renouncing the London Treaty." The matter, he added, must be decided at Frankfort; and Prussia, in accordance with her position as a European Power and as a member

of the Bund, would stand with special firmness for German rights in the duchies, and for her own self-respect in the council of the Great Powers. But in the more private atmosphere of the Cabinet he was already indicating a belief that the true solution of the question lay, not in the formation of a new German State under the Prince, but in the acquisition of the duchies by Prussia. "In a council held immediately after the death of Frederick VII. [he] reminded the King that every one of his immediate ancestors had won an increment of territory for the State. Frederick William IV. had acquired Hohenzollern and the Jahde District; Frederick William III., the Rhine Province; Frederick William II., Poland; Frederick II., Silesia; Frederick William I., Old Hither Pomerania; the Great Elector, Further Pomerania, &c.; and he encouraged the King to do likewise!" The speech was received with consternation. The King seemed to imagine that Bismarck "had spoken under the Bacchic influences of a déjeuner"; the Crown Prince raised his hands to heaven, as if he doubted the Minister's sanity. But Bismarck was neither mad nor drunk. He was merely preparing his master for the ambitious policy which was the object of his life, the aggrandisement of Prussia in Germany.

Of these ambitious views, however, there was no trace in Bismarck's more public declarations. Intervention in the duchies, he saw clearly—if it occurred at all—must be effected by Germany, and in preparing this intervention it was, above all things, necessary to carry Austria with him. It was only after war had been declared and concluded that his true intention became publicly visible. Austria insisted on the rights of the Prince of Augustenburg, and Prussia replied that the duchies were now German by right of conquest, and that she could only consent to acknowledge the Prince of Augustenburg's claim on condition that

some territorial concessions, including the harbour of Kiel, were made to Prussia, and that the absolute disposal of the land and sea forces of the duchies was assigned to the Prussian King.

It was thus already evident that, if one German question had been solved by the defeat of Denmark, another, and a much more serious, question had been raised by the differences between the two conquerors as to the disposal of the spoil. These differences were temporarily arranged at Gastein in the summer of 1865. It was then agreed that the government of Holstein should be handed over to Austria, and that of Schleswig to Prussia; that Lauenburg should be annexed to Prussia; that Kiel should be a German port under the control of Prussia; and that Prussia should have a right to connect the Baltic and the North Sea by a canal, and to construct railways through Holstein. These arrangements, reluctantly conceded by Austria, were obviously to the advantage of Prussia, and the King, recognising the obligations which his Minister had conferred on him, raised him to the rank of a count.[1] It was perhaps, from Bismarck's point of view, of still more importance that the acquisition of new territory inspired the King with a desire for more. "His frame of mind," so Bismarck said, "underwent a psychological change; he developed a taste for conquest."

The King's pleasure was not shared by the Prussian Legislature. The Liberal majority of the Chamber

[1] The manner in which Bismarck carried the treaty is worth recording. "When I was negotiating the treaty of Gastein with Blome, I played quinze for the last time in my life. Although I had not played then for a long time, I gambled recklessly, so that the others were astounded. But I knew what I was at. Blome had heard that quinze gave the best opportunity of testing a man's character, and he was anxious to try the experiment on me. I thought to myself, I'll teach him. I lost a few hundred thalers. . . . But I got round Blome in that way, and made him do what I wanted. He took me to be reckless, and yielded" (Busch, vol. i. p. 451).

naturally resented the autocratic policy of the Minister. They supported the claims of the Prince of Augustenburg; they denied the right of the Crown to incorporate Lauenburg in Prussia without the approval of Parliament; they carried a resolution to that effect by a great majority; and the opposition was so pronounced that Bismarck did not even venture to ask for the supplies which he required. The hostility which Bismarck's policy provoked in Prussia was felt even more acutely in other countries. Austria, though agreeing to the arrangements of Gastein, could not help perceiving that all the substantial advantages of the war had fallen to Prussia, and that she had herself added new strength to her northern rival. Italy, which had seen a fresh opportunity in the increasing estrangement of Austria from Prussia, was dissatisfied at a treaty which apparently had again brought the two German Powers into closer alliance; while France, not unnaturally dismayed at the aggrandisement of Prussia, and at an alliance between Austria and Prussia, complained openly that the Treaty of London had been torn up, and that the interests of Germany had been sacrificed to the sole profit of the two Powers who had been parties to the war.

These criticisms were all founded on the hypothesis that the agreement concluded at Gastein was likely to endure. The one man, however, who had no faith in its continuance was Bismarck himself. The ink was hardly dry on the document which he had inspired before he was actively preparing for the struggle with Austria which he had from the first regarded as inevitable. The future of Prussia — the future of Germany herself — was to be determined, so he had always predicted, by blood and iron; and the time was coming very near for the application of the remedy. In the previous October, when the differences between Austria and Prussia were becoming

acute, General La Marmora, the Prime Minister of Italy, had declared in the Italian Chamber that, if war broke out, Italy would know how to take advantage of the struggle, and that Austria, were she well advised, would relieve herself of a serious danger by the cession of Venice. This speech convinced Bismarck that, in the event of war, he might hope to place Austria between two fires; and immediately before the Treaty of Gastein was signed he directed his Ambassador at Florence to inquire what part Italy would take if war occurred.[1] General La Marmora with difficulty concealed the satisfaction which the inquiry gave him. He, however, coldly replied that, if Prussia had a serious proposal to make, it should be carefully considered; but that she was entirely mistaken if she supposed that she could draw from him an unconsidered declaration, which could be used to Italy's disadvantage, and to Prussia's profit, at Vienna. In any case, Italy could do nothing without the assent of the Emperor of the French.

The annoyance which the French Government was displaying at the arrangements of Gastein, and the reluctance of the Italian Minister to move without the knowledge of France, proved to Prince Bismarck that the key which might unlock the future was in the Emperor Napoleon's hands, and he decided on undertaking what he called "the pilgrimage" to Biarritz, where the Emperor was staying, for the purpose of endeavouring to arrive at an understanding with him. He had two things obviously to secure. First, the neutrality of France in the event of war; and, second, the assent of France to a Prussian-Italian alliance. No man knows exactly what passed at Biarritz. Bismarck did not imitate the example of Cavour, and reduce to writing the arrangements which were made. But the

[1] Nearly three years before, Bismarck had caused the same question to be put to Count Pasolini, who then held the Italian Foreign Office (Pasolini, Memoirs, p. 238).

course of events makes it tolerably easy to collect the substance of the decisions, and even to conjecture the arguments which prevailed with Napoleon.

In the first place, the very fact that France was disturbed at the prospect of an alliance between Austria and Prussia made it certain that the Emperor would not be indisposed to a rupture between these countries. Allies, they might prove a formidable menace to the safety of France, or at any rate a formidable curb to French ambition; divided, France might fairly hope that her own position would be strengthened, and that she would be able by forcible intervention to impose terms on either of them. The Emperor, therefore, had no hesitation in promising his neutrality in the event of war, reserving, at the same time, liberty to intervene if the events of the war necessitated intervention. Nor had Bismarck much difficulty in persuading him that Italy should be allowed to be a party to the war. The Emperor's dream of 1859 had been the liberation of the Peninsula from the Alps to the Adriatic; his promise had been frustrated at Villafranca by the attitude of Prussia; and it probably seemed to him a sound stroke of policy to make Prussia rake out of the fire the chestnuts which in 1859 she had prevented him from securing. It is certain, moreover, that the Emperor thought that even Prussia and Italy combined would have a difficult task before them. His own experience in 1859 had taught him to attach a high value to the Austrian army. All his advisers assured him—and it is fair to recollect that Lord Palmerston had received similar assurances from British officers—that the Prussian army was of little use, and one of the best informed of them had just told him that it could not stand against Austrian troops. Even with Italian help, therefore, the Prussians, so the Emperor thought, had a hard task before them; and in the months through which a long and difficult war

would be protracted, he would have ample leisure to organise his own forces and to prepare for any eventuality.

But, in the next place, Bismarck had other arguments, which were sure to have weight with the Emperor. The absorption of the duchies in Prussia was, he could contend, only a new application of the Emperor's own principle of Nationalities. Just as the doctrine of Nationalities required that Venetia should be Italian and Savoy French, so it demanded that duchies in which there was a large German element should be German. True, their absorption in Prussia would increase the weight of Prussia. But France could obtain compensation by the application of the same principle. Belgium, Luxemburg, French Switzerland—even the Rhine Provinces of Germany—these were all places to which Napoleon might conceivably look. At any rate it was easy for Bismarck to dangle temptations of this character before the eyes of the Emperor.[1] And as the Emperor only listened, and did not pin him to his words, Bismarck had the rare good fortune of obtaining what he required without giving a distinct pledge of anything in return.

For Bismarck practically secured, either at Biarritz or in the negotiations which followed his interview with the Emperor, all that he required. He obtained from the Emperor a promise of the neutrality which was essential to him, and the Emperor himself undertook to recommend to Italy the Prussian alliance. It is no wonder that Bismarck returned in exceptionally good spirits from what he afterwards called his beloved Biarritz. French abstention, Italian assistance,[2] both were practically secured to him. He had

[1] It is certain that, if he did not use this language to the Emperor himself, he used it in quarters from which it would be necessarily carried to the Emperor's ears. See Rothan, "La Politique Française en 1866," p. 53 and note.

[2] It was at this time that Bismarck said, "Si l'Italie n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer."

only one thing more to accomplish: to provoke Austria into the war on which he was determined.

It would be impossible within our present limits to trace the events in the beginning of 1866 which produced fresh differences between the two German Powers, and which enabled Bismarck to throw on Austria the responsibility of disregarding the provisions agreed to at Gastein. In the course of these months, however, the question gradually became enlarged, and the quarrel, which was originally confined to the future of Schleswig-Holstein, more and more evidently turned on the future of Germany. In the middle of this anxious time, when Bismarck's policy was being hotly denounced by Prussian Liberals, and when his dismissal from the King's councils was being demanded by the Prussian press, Cohen Blind made his determined attempt on the Minister's life. The crime marked a crisis in Bismarck's fortunes. Superstitious Germans were inclined to agree with the opinion of the medical man who attended him: "There is but one explanation [of his escape from death]: God has His hand in the matter." Germans who were not superstitious had their sympathies aroused for a Minister whose life had been cruelly attempted while he was in his country's service. The sympathy which was consequently excited was increased by Bismarck's own speech to the people who thronged the street in which his house stood to congratulate him on his safety: "Death for King and fatherland is sweet, even if he should meet us on the street pavement and by an assassin's hand." Thenceforward the unpopularity which Bismarck had incurred decreased, till a few weeks later it gave way before the universal enthusiasm which the success of his measures aroused.

For success was very near. In April an offensive and defensive alliance, to last for three months, was concluded between Italy and Prussia. Soon afterwards Bismarck

happened to meet at dinner a lady of great influence in Saxony, who ventured to say to him, "Is it really true that you are going to declare war to expel Austria from Germany, and occupy Saxony yourselves?" "My dear Countess," replied Bismarck, "I have from the first had this intention, and I have never ceased to prepare for it since I became Minister. The time is now ripe; our guns are all cast, and you will soon have an opportunity of realising that our new artillery is infinitely better than that of Austria." "You make me positively shudder," replied the lady; "but, since you are in a communicative vein, tell me what I should myself do if your sinister anticipations should be realised. I have two properties—one in Bohemia, the other near Leipzig—to which shall I go?" "If you take my advice," answered Bismarck, "you will not go into Bohemia, for, unless I am mistaken, it is in the neighbourhood of your own property that we shall fight the Austrians. I advise you, therefore, to go quietly into Saxony. Nothing is likely to happen near Leipzig, and you will, therefore, be safe there from the inconveniences of war." The lady naturally reported this remarkable conversation, and Bismarck was asked by the representatives of foreign Courts to explain his meaning. He put off the inquiry by declining to be held responsible for a joke at dinner.[1] But the joke had done its work. Austria at once moved some additional troops into Bohemia, and Bismarck, complaining of these reinforcements, declared that they were a menace to Berlin, and threw the responsibility of a probable rupture on Austria.

War immediately resulted from the protest which Austria lodged against the occupation of Holstein by Prussian troops. On June 14 she ordered the mobilisation of the armies of all the German States not belonging to Prussia.

[1] "Il se tira d'affaire en donnant à l'incident un tour plaisant" (Rothan, "La Politique Française en 1866," p. 113).

The Prussian Minister declared this proceeding to be a violation of the constitution, and called on the Middle States—Hanover, Saxony and Hesse—to disarm and pledge themselves to neutrality in the coming contest. On their refusal, troops were moved into each of these countries. The Hanoverian army was defeated, Hesse Cassel was overrun, and Leipzig was occupied. The immediate success of these operations enabled Prussia to converge the mass of her forces on Bohemia itself; and on July 3, a war, which had only commenced in the last fortnight of June, was practically concluded by the complete overthrow of the Austrians at Sadowa.

The total defeat of his troops convinced the Emperor of Austria that peace was absolutely essential, and he turned at once to France to help him in his difficulty. He offered to cede Venetia to Napoleon on condition that the Emperor would insist on an armistice in Italy and undertake the negotiation of a peace. If France would only temporarily occupy Venice, so Austria thought, a barrier would practically be imposed between Italy and Vienna, and the Emperor could move the forces which had been watching the Italian army to reinforce his discomfited battalions in Bohemia. Napoleon at once communicated the request which had been conveyed to him both to the Italian and the Prussian Governments, and he gained some little prestige in France by announcing that his intervention had been asked to terminate the war. The inhabitants of Paris even illuminated their windows from their satisfaction on learning that France was to play a part worthy of her history in the settlement of the dispute.

The satisfaction which was temporarily felt at Paris was not shared by the Emperor or his advisers. The Emperor especially had been rudely undeceived by the rapid success of the Prussian army. He had reckoned on a long war and on an indecisive struggle, and he was suddenly face to face

with the fact that the Prussian army, which he had hitherto despised, was the finest in the world. However gladly, moreover, the sovereign who was defeated might court his intervention, it did not at all follow that it would be equally welcome to the sovereign who was victorious. The only chance, in fact, of being able to insist on peace seemed to lie in being ready for war ; and M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who held the French Foreign Office, at once urged that the Emperor should support his proposals by moving 80,000 men towards the Prussian frontier, by summoning the French Chambers, and by asking for a loan of £40,000,000. But this energetic counsel was rejected, after warm discussion, by the Emperor, and its rejection was necessary. For, incredible as it seems, the Emperor had not 80,000 men at his disposal. It is more than doubtful if in 1866 he could have put more than 40,000 men in line against the Prussian army.

Armed intervention, therefore, was impossible. All that the Emperor could do was to rely on any influence which he might still possess to moderate the pretensions of the victors. And it was at first very doubtful whether either Italy or Prussia would stay their hands at his bidding. Italy, indeed, whose part in the war had been, to say the least, inglorious, was bent on continuing the struggle, and on winning Venetia by the efforts of her own soldiery. The Prussian Court, on the other hand, elated by the successes of their troops, desired to dictate peace under the walls of Vienna. Bismarck was almost alone in urging a contrary course. His moderation in the hour of his triumph in 1866 is, perhaps, the one thing in which he showed himself the superior of his great Italian predecessor, Cavour. In all the events which had preceded the war, in his interview with Napoleon, in his efforts to put Austria in the wrong, he had pursued the policy of Cavour so closely that the mantle of the Italian Minister seemed to have

fallen on the shoulders of the Prussian statesman. But—while, after Villafranca Cavour urged a policy of action which would probably have deprived Italy of all she had won—after Sadowa, Bismarck warmly supported a policy of moderation, which unquestionably enabled him to secure the fruits of his victory before entering on the new and greater struggle, which from that moment he never ceased to contemplate.

If in this crisis he displayed a statesmanlike moderation, he concurrently showed that his diplomacy was full of resource. We have no desire to become the apologists of the third Napoleon; we think that his rule was in many respects a misfortune for France and for Europe. But we cannot help being moved at the pathetic spectacle of the Emperor in the last four years of his reign, stricken with a painful disease, distracted by the contrary counsels of his advisers, his old habits of irresolution increased by age and illness, engaged in a hopeless struggle with the strongest and most pitiless statesman of the century. The Emperor, satisfied that he had no troops to enforce his views, threw himself from the first on the generosity of a statesman who probably regarded generosity in a diplomatist as a crime. Before the war, Bismarck had dangled all sorts of promises before the Emperor's eyes, and the Emperor imagined that after the war he had only to ask for their redemption. Thus he was ready to give Prussia almost everything that she required, in the expectation that in return Bismarck would enable him to secure the increase of territory which he thought essential for France. French historians tell us that when Herr von Goltz, the Prussian Minister at Paris, called on M. Drouyn de Lhuys to explain the proposals of his Court, he was careful to minimise the orders which he had received. The Prussian territories, he said, unrolling a map, were severed by intervening States; it was necessary

to make some small annexations here and there to render them contiguous. But these annexations were, after all, only small. They merely concerned some 300,000 people, and they would chiefly be at the expense of Hesse, whose sovereign was unpopular. M. Drouyn de Lhuys admitted that the annexations were not of much importance. But at the same time he argued that the transfer of a population of 300,000 souls from one State to another was a subject which must be carefully considered and approved by Europe. Unable to procure the assent of the Minister, Von Goltz drove at once to the sovereign and prevailed on him to assent to the annexation of Hanover, Electoral Hesse, Frankfort, and Nassau to Prussia, annexations which involved the addition of some 4,500,000 souls to the Prussian kingdom.

In assenting to this great extension the Emperor undoubtedly thought that he would obtain Bismarck's support of the rectifications which he desired to make in his own frontier, and he at once instructed the French Ambassador at Berlin to apply for the territory which he conceived that he could claim as the price of his good will. In the conversations which then took place, and which occurred before the preliminaries of the peace had been finally ratified, Bismarck showed some disposition to admit that territorial compensation was due to France. But when the French Ambassador proceeded to suggest that the compensation might be found in the annexation to France of Prussian territory between the Moselle and the Rhine,[1] Bismarck at once pleaded the reluctance

[1] Immediately before the war Bismarck had himself suggested some such arrangement. He said to the French Ambassador at Berlin: "Il ne serait peut-être pas tout-à-fait impossible d'amener le Roi à céder à la France les bords de la haute Moselle. Cette acquisition, jointe à celle du Luxembourg, redresserait votre frontière de manière à vous donner toute satisfaction" (De la Gorce, "Hist. du Second Empire," vol. iv. p. 626).

of his sovereign to cede any portion of his hereditary dominions, and suggested that France might obtain a satisfactory equivalent in Belgium. The French Government did not, however, immediately abandon its original proposal—on the contrary, it prepared a draft treaty, which it directed its Ambassador to present to Bismarck, claiming the line of the Rhine, including the fortress of Mayence, for France. There are two accounts of the manner in which this demand was made. Bismarck said: "The Ambassador of France came into my room, holding an ultimatum in his hand requiring the cession of Mayence, and threatening war if it was refused. I did not hesitate to reply, 'Very well, we choose war. But tell your Emperor that the war which he is provoking must become a war of revolution, and that in such a struggle the dynasties of Germany may prove themselves more solidly established than the dynasty of the Emperor.'" M. Benedetti, the French Ambassador at Berlin, on the contrary, declares that so far from walking into Bismarck's room with an ultimatum in his hand, he prepared him for the discussion by sending him beforehand a copy of the proposed treaty, and that, so far from choosing war, Bismarck seemed anxious to conciliate France; and, in declaring it impossible to consent to the cession of Mayence, offered other arrangements satisfactory to the interests of both countries. It is probable that the truth may be found by fusing the two accounts. But it is certain that the result of the interview was a rude blow to the Emperor's policy, and that it led directly to the resignation of his Foreign Minister, M. Drouyn de Lhuys.

Unprepared for war, but profoundly dejected at the check which he had received, the Emperor, with a lack of generosity which, it is fair to say, was unusual in him, threw the blame of failure on his retiring Minister.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys—he wrote to his successor, M. de la Valette—had conceived the idea of sending a draft treaty to Berlin. This treaty, which ought to have been kept secret, had made a great stir abroad; and it was obvious that, if it had been insisted on, France would have had to fight all Germany for the sake of securing a very slight rectification of her frontier. The true policy of France was quite different. She should help Germany to work out her future in the manner that was most favourable to the interests of France and to those of Europe. In accordance with this new decision, the Emperor concerted a fresh scheme with the German Ambassador at Paris. He suggested that Prussia should consent to the surrender of Saarbruck, Saarlouis, and Landau, and the transfer of Luxemburg to France; and that by a separate and secret treaty Prussia and France should agree to an offensive and defensive alliance, under which France should ultimately be at liberty to acquire Belgium. When this proposal reached Berlin, Bismarck refused to sanction any surrender of German territory; he moreover affected to prefer that the two treaties should be rolled into one; and, according to the French account,[1] at his dictation, M. Benedetti drew up a new treaty, omitting all reference to German territory, but stipulating that (1) Prussia should help France to acquire Luxemburg; (2) France should offer no opposition to a Federal Union between the new Confederation of Northern Germany and the States of Southern Germany; (3) if France should decide on the occupation or conquest of Belgium, Prussia should lend her armed assistance; and (4) to give effect to these arrangements, an offensive and defensive alliance should be concluded between the two Powers.

[1] It is fair to add that Bismarck declared that the treaty reached him from Paris in the form in which it was ultimately published.

In consenting to discuss these proposals Bismarck was to some extent sincere. We know from Busch that, in his judgment, Napoleon in the summer of 1866 lacked the courage to do what he ought to have done. "He could have done a good stroke of business, although not on German soil. When we attacked Austria he should have occupied —— [it is difficult to avoid filling up the blank with Luxemburg], and held it as a pledge. We could not have prevented him at that time, and most probably England would not have stirred. If the *coup* had succeeded he might have placed himself back to back with us, encouraging us to further aggression. But," he added, "he is, and remains, a muddle-headed fellow." And, if Bismarck would not have objected to the transfer of Luxemburg to France, he would probably have seen with pleasure a French invasion of Belgium. For he knew that such a proceeding would necessarily destroy the good understanding between France and England, and would leave France absolutely isolated. It was a characteristic of Bismarck's policy—which he applied in turn to France, Austria, and Russia—to distract the attention of troublesome neighbours from Germany by embroiling them elsewhere.

The proposals of France, moreover, had placed in his hands a new weapon, of which he did not scruple to avail himself. On the very day on which he received the Emperor's first proposal from Benedetti, he sent a special envoy to St. Petersburg to communicate it confidentially to the Russian Government. With such evidence it was not difficult to persuade the Russian Government that France was contemplating fresh schemes of aggrandisement, which it was the interest both of Europe and of Russia to resist. In the same way the draft treaty relating to Belgium was carefully preserved; and, when war broke out between France and Prussia

in 1870, was reproduced in *fac-simile* and published by Bismarck.

Strengthened by the assurance of Russian support, aware of the weakness of France, and relying, perhaps, on the evidence which the draft of the secret treaty afforded him, Bismarck declared to Benedetti that the proposals of France were made with the object of embroiling Prussia with England, and refused to entertain them. But at the same time he was careful to point out that he did not abandon the hope of an alliance with France, and that, if France could make the necessary arrangement with Holland for the cession of Luxemburg, Prussia would not oppose it. "Commit yourselves," so he argued, "to the arrangement, and you will find us ready to second your efforts. Let the cession be a *fait accompli* before the Reichstag meets, and I will undertake to induce Germany to swallow the pill." For the moment, however, worn out with the fatigue of the campaign and of the labours which had followed it, he was going to seek health and rest at Varzin, and the conclusion of any more formal arrangement must be deferred till after his return.

Thus the negotiation, which had commenced in July and August, 1866, was practically suspended until the end of the year. Before it was resumed, new facts had been disclosed which enormously increased the power of Prussia and the embarrassment of the French Emperor. In the Peace of Prague, by which the war had been concluded, the new Confederation of the North had been practically confined to the line of the Main, and the South German States had been left free to form themselves into a new confederation. Napoleon undoubtedly thought that the recollections of the war would create a barrier between the North and the South, and that he himself would be able to exercise a preponderating influence in Southern Germany.

He was startled to find in November that Bismarck had succeeded in concluding treaties with the South German States which had placed their whole military force at the disposal of Prussia. The French complained that the Treaty of Prague had practically been torn up when the new arrangements were made, and with a heavy heart they resumed the negotiations which had been interrupted in the summer. Our space makes it impossible for us to follow the history of these negotiations. Bismarck had frankly told the French in August that they must secure the cession of Luxemburg by Holland before the Reichstag met, and, as a matter of fact, the meeting of the Reichstag made success hopeless. Public opinion in Germany was obviously opposed to the transaction; the Prussian army was anxious for war with France, and war for a short time seemed inevitable.

We have the authority of a French historian for saying that, if war had broken out in 1867, France would have been even less prepared for the struggle than she proved in 1870. The three years of grace which were secured to her did enable her to make some preparations. Bismarck, however, arrived at a different conclusion. He thought that delay was on the side of his own country. She required time to assimilate what she had already won, and to organise the armies of Northern as well as of Southern Germany on the Prussian model. "Each year's postponement of the war," he wrote, "would add 100,000 trained soldiers to our army." He said the same thing before Paris in 1871: "I have often thought over what would have happened if we had gone to war about Luxemburg. Should I now be in Paris, or would the French be in Berlin? I think I did well to prevent war at that time. We should not have been nearly so strong as we are to-day."

Thus, in opposition to the Court, the army, and public

opinion, Bismarck made up his mind to bide his time. He had, perhaps, already in his own judgment determined the precise time at which war should break out. The arrangements with the South German States gave Prussia control of their forces; and some three years were required to reorganise them on a Prussian model. It was therefore to the advantage of Prussia that if war were to come it should not come before 1870. Its immediate cause, as every one knows, was the election of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain. Bismarck, indeed, maintained that he had very little to do with the Prince's selection. When France first complained of the choice which had been made, he replied that the Ministry knew nothing about the matter, and he added in his Memoirs that "this was correct so far, that the question of Prince Leopold's acceptance of his election had been treated by his Majesty simply as a family matter, which in no way concerned either Prussia or the North German Confederation." But we know from Busch that Bismarck's account is simply untrue; that the candidature had been discussed by the entire Prussian Ministry; that it had been arranged by a member of Bismarck's own staff, specially sent to Madrid for the purpose; and that it was regarded by Busch himself as a trap set for Napoleon.

Bismarck, however, had comparatively little to do with the negotiations which preceded the rupture. The King of Prussia was at Ems, and, without the advice or knowledge of his Minister, entered into the now famous conversation with the French Ambassador Benedetti. Bismarck thought that the concessions which the King made, and which, in his own strong language, "had exposed his royal person to insolent treatment from the foreign agent," had made his own position untenable, and he decided to retire. The day on which he arrived at this decision, July 13, 1870, he asked Von Roon, the Secretary of War, and Moltke to dine with him. While

they were at dinner the famous telegram arrived from Ems announcing that Benedetti had asked the King to bind himself for all future time never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. The telegram went on, quoting the King's exact words: "I refused at last somewhat sternly, as it is neither right nor possible to undertake engagements of this kind *à tout jamais*. Naturally I told him that I had as yet received no news [*i.e.*, from Madrid], and as he was earlier informed about Paris and Madrid than myself he could clearly see that my Government once more had no hand in the matter." It was obvious from the King's account of the meeting that nothing discourteous to France had been said or intended. In telegraphing the report to Bismarck by the King's orders, Count Abeken, who was in attendance on the King, added: "His Majesty has since received a letter from the Prince. His Majesty having told Count Benedetti that he was awaiting news from the Prince, has decided, with reference to the above demand, upon the representation of Count Eulenburg and myself, not to receive Count Benedetti again, but only to let him be informed, through an aide-de-camp, that his Majesty had now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and had nothing further to say to the Ambassador." The telegram added that the King left it to Bismarck to determine whether the new demand and its rejection should not at once be communicated to the press.

We know from Bismarck himself that, when he read this telegram to his guests, their dejection was so great that "they turned away from food and drink." Bismarck thought differently. He took the precaution of ascertaining from Moltke that no advantage could be gained by deferring war—that, on the contrary, its rapid outbreak would be more favourable to Germany than delay, and he

thereupon undertook to edit the telegram for publication. The telegram had consisted of two parts: the King's own account of what had occurred, and Abeken's subsequent addition to it. Bismarck ran the two together. The revised telegram recited accurately Benedetti's demand. But, instead of giving the King's firm but courteous answer, it substituted for it a portion of the message which Abeken said the King had sent to Benedetti later on. And this substitution was not given fairly. The message had said that the King had decided not to receive Benedetti again, but only to inform him through an aide-de-camp that *his Majesty had now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had received from Paris*, and had nothing further to say. It is obvious, therefore, that the King's meaning was: "The news which you gave me" (of the Prince's declining the throne) "is now confirmed. I have nothing to add to what I said to you this morning." But Bismarck, by omitting the words which we have placed in italics, and connecting the message to Benedetti directly with Benedetti's demand, gave the telegram a wholly different meaning. His version ran: "After the news of the renunciation of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated to the Imperial Government of France by the Royal Government of Spain, the French Ambassador at Ems further demanded of his Majesty the King that he would authorise him to telegraph to Paris that his Majesty the King bound himself for all future time never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. His Majesty the King thereupon decided not to receive the French Ambassador again, and sent to tell him through the aide-de-camp on duty that his Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the Ambassador."

It has been contended that "there are no grounds what-

ever for the accusation so often made that Bismarck falsified his monarch's telegram." We can only say that we are unable to understand how any man of intelligence can arrive at such a conclusion. Moltke, at any rate, formed a very different opinion. "Now," he said, "it has a different ring; it sounded before like a parley; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge." And Bismarck declared himself that the telegram would have the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull. The Duc de Gramont regarded the matter in the same light. The telegram had "insulted France by declaring to the public that the King had insulted the French Ambassador. The King had, indeed, really not treated Count Benedetti with the rude impoliteness of which the Prussian Government bragged; but it was precisely this boasting that constituted the offence." In other words, it was the language of the telegram, and not the conduct of the King, which led to the almost immediate declaration of war by France.

In deciding on war in 1870—for the decision was virtually his—Bismarck showed that he was a much better judge of the relative strength of the opposing forces than any French statesman. He knew that in physique,[1] in numbers, in organisation, in arms, the German army was superior to the French; and he had every reason for thinking that the French had no general who could be compared with Moltke. The only uneasiness he felt arose from the possible interference of other Powers. The rapid success of the German arms made, indeed, the intervention of Austria impossible. But Russia was a more formidable neighbour, and Bismarck bid high for her neutrality. We have Busch's authority for saying that "as early as September 1—that is, before the battle

[1] Bismarck mentioned at Versailles that the front of the company of the Pomeranian Landwehr was at least five feet broader that that of a French company (Busch, i. p. 275).

of Sedan—Prussia had intimated in St. Petersburg that she would put no difficulties in the way of such action in the matter of the Black Sea" as Russia eventually took in the following November. As a matter of fact, indeed, when the Russian claim was made, Bismarck privately said that "the Russians should not have been so modest in their demands. They ought to have asked for more."

In the conduct of the war Bismarck had, of course, no share. But he had, nevertheless, frequent opportunities of showing that, in his judgment, war was war, and that in war the sternest measures were, on the whole, the most humane. He over and over again declared that Paris should have been immediately stormed. He ridiculed the notion that its bombardment should be avoided because it contained works of art. "If the French wanted to preserve their monuments and collections of books and pictures from the dangers of war, they should not have surrounded them with fortifications." The life of one German soldier was "worth more than all the trashy pictures" in Versailles. His voice, too, was always in favour of the extreme measures which war perhaps justifies. "Our people," he complained, "are very good marksmen, but bad executioners. Every village in which an act of treachery has been committed should be burned to the ground, and all the male inhabitants hanged." When he was told that 1,600 prisoners had been taken on the Loire, he remarked, "I should have been better pleased if they had all been corpses. It is simply a disadvantage to us now to make prisoners." In a similar strain, when Jules Favre, during the negotiations at Versailles, told him that his position was very critical, Bismarck coolly replied, "Provoquez donc une émeute pendant que vous avez encore une armée pour l'étouffer." "Favre," he added, "looked at me quite terror-stricken, as if he wished to say, 'How bloodthirsty

you are!' I explained to him, however, that this was the only way to manage a mob." Omelettes, to quote a famous simile, cannot be made without breaking eggs. And, when he wanted to make an omelette, Bismarck broke his eggs with a very light heart.

His pitiless character was equally visible throughout the negotiations for peace. It is interesting to see that before the war had lasted a fortnight he had made up his mind to annex Alsace. After the battle of Gravelotte Busch was able to record his chief's reasons for retaining Alsace, Metz, and its environs. All that Thiers's eloquence could do in 1871 was to save Belfort for France. And it is a little doubtful whether Belfort had not been put forward as the Jonah to be eventually sacrificed in the name of moderation. Bismarck himself, indeed, had some hesitation even about Metz. He said at the time, "If they were to give us another milliard we might perhaps leave them Metz. . . . I do not want so many Frenchmen in our house. It is the same with Belfort, which is entirely French. But the soldiers will not hear of giving up Metz, and perhaps they are right."

The war, of course, did much more than humiliate France. It consolidated Germany. The King of Prussia became Emperor of Germany. The policy which Bismarck had from the first contemplated had been worked out by blood and iron as he had predicted. But the Empire which had been created had still to be preserved; and Bismarck's efforts to preserve it during the twenty years of peace which followed were as strenuous and unceasing as those which had led to the triumph of his country.

From the moment at which peace was made Bismarck foresaw that France would seize any favourable opportunity for regaining her lost provinces. The unexpected ease with which she discharged the great indemnity imposed on her convinced him that her resources were larger, and

that the danger was consequently greater, than he had first imagined. But, wealthy and powerful as she was proving herself to be, France could not hope for success in a new struggle if she entered it alone. The only possible allies which she could secure were Austria, still sore at her defeat in 1866, and Russia. It was, therefore, to the obvious advantage of Germany that she should arrive at a clear understanding with both these Powers, and with this object, even before the termination of the war of 1870, Bismarck made overtures to Austria. Prussia, he argued, had gained all that she required. Neither Austria nor any other Power had anything to fear from her ambition; and the time had accordingly come for burying the past, and for closer friendship between the two Great Powers of Central Europe. Both Von Beust and Andrassy, who successively controlled the foreign policy of Austria, readily responded to these overtures. The Emperors of Austria and Germany personally met, and a complete reconciliation was established between them.

By this arrangement the French were deprived of the assistance of the one nation which conceivably might also have grasped at an opportunity for a *revanche*. But Bismarck did not stop at this point. Russia and Austria had been estranged from one another since the days of the Crimean War, and Bismarck addressed himself to the task of overcoming this estrangement. His tact and ability were again rewarded. The three Emperors met at Berlin in 1872, and the *Drei-Kaiser-Bund* was the result of the meeting. In the following year a military convention was concluded between Russia and Germany, which was subsequently confirmed by the two Emperors, but which Bismarck did not sign, pledging each country to assist the other in case either should be attacked.

The close understanding between the three Empires obviously made peace in Europe certain. When Austria,

Germany, and Russia were agreed no other Power could contemplate an attack on any of them. The French, however, did not relax their efforts to repair the defects in their military organisation which had been so cruelly revealed to them ; and these efforts were so constant and so effectual that in 1875 Bismarck was almost universally credited with a desire to renew the war and crush France before they were completed. He has himself, indeed, told us that this idea was a mere "myth of Prince Gortchakoff, who spread the lie that we intended to fall on France before she had recovered from her wounds." Perhaps, however, without unduly straining his conscience, he might have equally urged in the summer of 1870 that he had no desire for war. Myth or not, the idea that he desired war in 1875 was generally entertained in other countries, and many people still think that war was only prevented by the strong remonstrances both of this country and of Russia. It is certain, at any rate, that Bismarck was profoundly irritated at Gortchakoff, who openly played the part of peacemaker, and that a certain coolness was imported into the relations between the Emperors of Russia and Germany. This coolness perceptibly increased during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78. Before war broke out Russia inquired whether, if she should go to war with Austria, she might rely on German neutrality, and Bismarck, after parrying the question for months, at length replied that "we could endure that our friends should lose or win battles against each other, but not that one of the two should be so severely wounded and injured that its position as an independent Great Power taking its part in the councils of Europe would be endangered." After the war Russia thought the conduct of Bismarck, in playing the part of "the honest broker" at the Congress of Berlin, unfriendly. The Empress Marie openly complained, "Votre amitié est trop platonique"; and the Czar curtly

told the Emperor, "Your Majesty's Chancellor has forgotten the promises of 1870."

Thus, at the end of 1879, the good understanding which had been established between the three Emperors was virtually destroyed, and Russia was practically estranged from Germany. Her estrangement induced Bismarck to draw more closely the bonds which united him with Austria. The *Drei-Kaiser-Bund* was an understanding—a *liaison;* it was time to replace the irregular *liaison* with a regular alliance. In August, 1879, Bismarck met Andrassy at Gastein and talked over the subject. The two statesmen agreed to, and the Emperor of Austria readily approved of, a new treaty between the two countries, pledging both of them, in the event of either of them being attacked by a third Power, jointly to repel such attack with their entire united strength. The provisions of the treaty were not carried without grave difficulty. The Emperor William, personally on friendly terms with the Emperor of Russia, strongly objected to an arrangement which was aimed distinctly against Russia, and which—he argued with some force—was inconsistent with the convention which had been concluded in 1873. Bismarck, however, determined to have his way, brought the matter before the Cabinet, and left the Emperor to choose between consenting to the treaty and a change of Ministers; and the Emperor, though unconvinced by his Minister's arguments, at last "gave the promise to ratify the treaty only because he was averse to ministerial changes."[1] In

[1] The arrangement seems to have been embodied in two distinct treaties—one contemplating an attack on either of the contracting parties by Russia; the other, war between one of them and France. Bismarck says in his "Memoirs," vol. ii. p. 272: "The treaty which we concluded with Austria for common defence against a Russian attack is *publici juris*. An analogous treaty between the two Powers for defence against France has not been published." M. de Cyon, in his interesting "Histoire de l'Entente Franco-

1883, Italy, estranged from France by French policy in Tunis, joined the alliance which was thus formed.[1]

Bismarck had now succeeded in consolidating an alliance between the three central Powers of Europe. He had undoubtedly been prompted to do so by the prospect of Russian aggression, and by the fear that Russia might combine with France. But, though he thus took what he would himself have considered a measure of precaution against Russia, he never lost sight of the possibility of arriving at a new understanding with his Eastern neighbour. The accession of a new Czar, and the appointment of M. de Giers to the chief place in the Russian Ministry, facilitated his policy. In 1884 the three Emperors met at Skiernevice and agreed on a new treaty. The first article of this treaty stipulated that if one of the three contracting Powers should be at war with a fourth Power, the two others should observe a benevolent neutrality towards their ally. It is stated that, as the article was originally drawn, it contained a provision that, if two of the contracting parties were engaged in a war with a fourth, the third should preserve the same benevolent neutrality. The Emperor of Russia, however, declined to agree to a stipulation which would have forced him to neutrality in the event of France being attacked by the combined force of Austria and Germany, and this provision was struck out.

Thus, in 1884, Bismarck had succeeded in strengthening

Russe," argues from the provisions of the subsequent Treaty of Skiernevice that it must have contained provisions for the active support of Germany by Austria in the event of a new Franco-German war (p. 59).

[1] The conditions on which Italy joined the Alliance do not seem to be accurately known. It was reported, however, that in the event of a war between Austria and Russia, Italy was to receive Roveredo and the Trentino as the price of her assistance. In the event of a war between Germany and France she was to obtain, according to one account, Tunis; according to another, Nice, Savoy, and a part of Provence. See M. de Cyon, "Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe," p. 261.

the position of Germany to an extraordinary extent. By his treaties with Austria he had arranged that if either Austria or Germany were attacked by another Power, both countries should combine to repel the attack. By the tripartite treaty of 1884 he had arranged that, if Germany were engaged in offensive war with France, Russia and Austria should, at any rate, observe a benevolent neutrality. If, in other words, France declared war against Germany, she would find herself opposed to Germany and Austria. If, on the other hand, Germany should declare war against France, France was deprived of all hope of either moral or material support from any first-rate continental Power.

So far the object and the purport of these various arrangements can be followed with comparative ease ; they dominated European politics for at least two years. In 1886, however, a large party in Russia displayed an increasing hostility to the German alliance. The agreement with Austria and Germany, they thought, was imposing new difficulties on Russia in the East, and the time had come for replacing it by a close alliance with France. The French about the same time showed in their enthusiasm for Boulanger a disposition to rid themselves of republican government, and to seek at last the long-deferred *revanche* for which they had been so sedulously preparing. They were naturally, in these circumstances, prepared to grasp at any prospect of closer alliance with Russia. With these symptoms before him Bismarck wisely renewed the arrangements which he had made in 1879 with Austria. And, in defending his policy in the Legislature, he used language which was understood to imply that the alliance between St. Petersburg and Berlin was at an end. But at this very time—as his own revelations in a German newspaper ten years afterwards showed —he had a secret treaty in his pocket "which seems to

have effectually guaranteed the neutrality of Russia and Germany respectively in the event of a war other than one of absolutely unprovoked aggression against any third Power."[1] Thus, so far as Germany was concerned, he was still adhering to his old system. Germany, Austria (and Italy) were to defend one another with all their power if either of them were attacked. And, if events should lead to war, other than of unprovoked aggression, between Germany and France, or between Russia and Austria, Germany and Russia, as the case might be, were to preserve a strict neutrality. It followed that (1) if France attacked Germany, she would find herself opposed to Germany, Austria, and Italy; (2) if Germany had a dispute with France which led to war, France could not rely on Russian assistance; (3) if Russia attacked Austria, Austria would receive Italian and German support; but (4) if, which was more probable, differences arose between Russia and Austria on the Eastern Question, Austria would be left to settle with Russia alone. Verily, if the Triple Alliance was of equal advantage both to Austria and Germany, the new arrangement with Russia left Austria very much in the cold.

In this rapid review of the career and of the achievements of a great statesman, we have been forced mainly to confine our attention to his foreign policy. Our space does not allow us to enter into his domestic measures, and we are compelled reluctantly to omit all reference to the struggles with the Church and with the Socialists, to the legislation which followed these struggles, and to the reasons which induced Bismarck in his later years to embark on a policy of colonial expansion abroad and

[1] See the *Times*, August 1, 1898. The reader may be interested in comparing this conclusion with M. de Cyon's account in "L'Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe." M. de Cyon, writing in 1895, was obviously unaware of the secret treaty between Russia and Germany, which was only disclosed in 1896.

of Protection at home. In these matters, indeed, the Chancellor displayed the same inflexibility of will and tenacity of purpose which characterised his foreign policy. He dominated over his sovereign, over his colleagues, and over the Legislature. No autocratic monarch ever claimed or exacted more absolute power. "L'état c'est moi," said Louis XIV., but during the twenty-four years of Bismarck's supremacy he might have said with equal truth, "Prussia, it is I."

In considering his policy as a whole it is impossible to avoid a feeling of admiration at the achievements which he accomplished, and at the use which he made of them. He unquestionably raised his own country in eight years from the position of a second-rate Power to the first place on the Continent, and he maintained the position which he had won for her in war by a series of alliances which made her practically secure from attack. Nor should it be forgotten that the results of his policy were, on the whole, good both for Europe and the world. The Treaty of Frankfort has given Western Europe, at any rate, thirty-six years of peace, and this result was ensured both by Bismarck's moderation in 1866 and by his severity in 1870. In the former year his wise decision to exact as little as possible from Austria, enforced as it was in opposition to his sovereign and the public opinion of his country, undoubtedly paved the way for that good understanding with Austria which has done so much in late years to secure the position which Bismarck won for Germany and Prussia. The penalty which he exacted from France in 1870, on the other hand, and which has produced the cry for that *revanche* which has been a disturbing element in European politics for more than a quarter of a century, has made war less likely, because it has made a French invasion of Germany more difficult. The strong places through which the tide of aggression had so frequently poured are now in

German keeping, and Germany can hardly be invaded with safety till both Metz and Strasburg are taken.

Whether, then, we consider the objects which Bismarck set himself to attain at the beginning of his career, or the surprising results which ensued from his policy, or the political combinations by which he secured for Prussia and Germany the position which he had won for them by blood and iron, we are convinced that the judgment of history will be in Bismarck's favour. But if history will almost certainly approve the ends, it is by no means so certain that it will approve the means by which the ends were won. Even Bismarck himself had some misgivings on this point. On one Sunday in October, 1877, he said to Busch that he had had little pleasure or satisfaction from his political life.

"He had made no one happy thereby, neither himself, nor his family, nor others. There is no doubt, however, that I have caused great unhappiness to great numbers. But for me, three great wars would not have taken place, eighty thousand men would not have been killed, and would not now be mourned by parents, brothers, sisters, and widows."

No doubt there was something morbid in this reflection. Much as we dislike war, there are occasions when war itself may be justifiable, and when death may be sweetened by the consolation that the life which we loved was given for the fatherland which we love too. But we like Bismarck the better for his indulgence in such reflections. They show us that he had somewhere hidden within him a softer side to his character, and they redeem the ferocious utterances which he made on the battlefields of 1870, and which he himself thought should not have been published.

There were, however, other expedients which Bismarck adopted, and which history will not approve. The Conservative will condemn his treatment of his sovereign,

hesitated to insist on the adoption of his own views. His sovereign had to choose between the adoption of his Minister's advice and the loss of his adviser; and as the monarch thought that he could not govern without Bismarck, he had practically no alternative but to give way. Bismarck, indeed, never made the mistake—into which Cavour in his fury after Villafranca is said to have fallen—of claiming that he was the real master: "I am the man whom all Italians recognise; I am the real King." But, if Bismarck never made the claim in words, "the most gracious," as he used to call his sovereign, must have felt every year, and almost every hour, of his reign, that Bismarck, and not he, was the real King of Prussia, the true Emperor of Germany.

If the King, in whose divine right he believed, had to yield on all questions of importance to his imperious Minister, lesser men and lesser institutions were brushed away with contempt. There was something almost brutal in the manner in which Bismarck habitually treated and spoke of the highest ladies in the land. From his subordinates he required and exacted an unfailing obedience. "My ambassadors," he said to one of them, "must wheel round like non-commissioned officers at the word of command without knowing why." He hardly treated the Legislature with more consideration than he showed for these exalted personages. There are, indeed, few things more remarkable in modern history than his determined disregard, from 1863 to 1866, of the decisions of Parliament, and his readiness to stake his own life and that of his sovereign on the issue of the contest.

If Bismarck more than any other man of the century realised the idea of the strong ruler to which Carlyle and Tennyson equally gave expression, his career illustrated the objection to concentrating power and responsibility on one man. The unhesitating obedience which he exacted

had the effect of depriving him of the service of men of mark; he consequently left no one trained in the art of statesmanship capable of filling his place. Even his unparalleled success, moreover, did not prevent the catastrophe of his fall. Whatever causes may have immediately led to his dismissal, there is no doubt that the true reason for his removal lay in the determination of the present Emperor to rule, and not to serve. He resented his great Chancellor's dictation, and freed himself from the restraint which it involved. He probably never paused to consider that autocracy in a monarch rests on no more permanent foundation than autocracy in a minister; and that while the failure of a minister may involve only the change of a system, the failure of a monarch may involve the ruin of a dynasty.

These considerations, however, are not wholly relevant to our present purpose. We gladly recognise here that Bismarck was the greatest statesman of our time; that, with the exception of Cavour, no other man has wrought similar work in modern Europe; and that the work which he set himself to do, and which he did with his whole might, was on the whole advantageous to his own people and the world. Judged by the results alone, his career both claims and deserves our admiration. But, if his achievements gain our admiration, his character cannot win either our respect or our love. It was perhaps well, both for his country and for Europe, that Germany, in the hour of her necessity, should have found a man of blood and iron to work out her future. But we may hope that his successors, while imitating him in his zeal, his industry, his unfailing loyalty towards race and country, may know how to combine consideration for others with the assertion of their own principles; may learn to play the great game of politics as vigorously, but more scrupulously; and may know how to display mercy in the hour of battle and moderation in the hour of victory.

NAPOLEON III.

MORE than thirty-six years have passed since a crushing defeat suddenly terminated the existence of the Second Empire. A whole generation has since grown up to manhood. Only a few of the men who stood round the throne of the third Napoleon survive. The events of his reign have already become matters of history; and as, in M. Guizot's phrase, the history of "the day before yesterday" is always imperfectly known, the policy of Napoleon III. is probably less familiar to many people than that of Napoleon I., and the character of the nephew than that of the uncle. Yet the last few years have done much to unveil the plots and counterplots which occurred and recurred during the whole course of the Second Empire. One by one the men who advised the sovereign have contributed to our knowledge of the past. We are no longer dependent on Victor Hugo's impassioned "Histoire d'un Crime" to appreciate the circumstances in which the Empire had its birth. We know more than M. Zola knew when he wrote the "Débâcle" of the causes which produced the final catastrophe at Sedan. During the last few years especially the publication of M. de la Gorce's "Histoire du Second Empire"—a work which has been crowned by the French Academy—of M. de Persigny's "Memoirs," of General Lebrun's "Recollections," and of M. Émile Ollivier's "L'Empire Liberal" has thrown new, and in some

respects strange, light on many of the events of the period. We ought, in consequence, to be able to sum up the results of the reign, and to weigh the character of the sovereign, without being misled either by the passions or prejudices which affected contemporary writers a quarter of a century ago; and we propose, accordingly, to devote a few pages to the task, with the aid of the books to which we have thus referred.

In order that we may fairly appreciate the events to which we shall have to allude, we must try to recall the circumstances in which Napoleon rose to the presidency of the French Republic in 1848. At that time a wave of revolution was sweeping over Europe. The election of a Liberal Pope, at the close of 1846, had stimulated the hopes of all those who were opposed to autocratic government. A feverish desire for change was affecting almost every nationality in Europe, and it was inevitable that a movement which was already causing disorder in Italy, and which was about to produce civil war in Austria, and a Chartist demonstration in London, should excite the susceptible population of France. Louis Philippe had reigned over the French people for nearly eighteen years. He had in M. Guizot one of the best instructed and best intentioned of modern statesmen as his adviser. All that was most respectable in the respectable middle class was in favour of the monarch and his Minister. But France has never been governed for any lengthened period by the bourgeoisie, and no other class had any enthusiasm for Louis Philippe. Legitimists were still desiring the return of the legitimate representative of the Bourbons. The people were still longing for popular government. M. Guizot's sober policy and reasoned utterances failed to impress the imagination. "The whole system of the Cabinet" (so a Deputy complained) "may be summed up in the words, 'Nothing, nothing, nothing.'" A policy of

"nothing" could not resist the force of a strong popular movement, and a demonstration, which might probably have been suppressed by a little activity, produced the fall of the Minister and the flight of the monarch.

We need not recapitulate at any length the events of the succeeding ten months. The brilliant episode of Lamartine's administration, the terrible rising of the Red Republicans, and the presidency of Cavaignac—all these things resulted, in some sort or other, in failure; and these failures led directly to the election of a Napoleon. Since the overthrow of the First Empire, France, in fact, had tried aristocratic government and hereditary monarchy, and had parted from both at the Revolution of July. She had tried middle-class government and constitutional monarchy, and had parted from both at the Revolution of 1848. She had tried popular government and republican institutions, and both had been discredited by the failure of Lamartine and the bloodshed of June. A terror of the Reds threw the friends of order together, and, as the two branches of the Bourbon family were impossible, induced them to concur in the election of the Prince who represented the achievements of the First Empire.

At the time of Louis Napoleon's election to the presidency there were many Frenchmen who had raised themselves to eminence by their abilities. Whatever may be the case in our own time, France in 1848 had no dearth of great men. In Victor Hugo she had a great man of letters, in Arago a great man of science, in De Tocqueville a great political thinker. But besides these men, whose temperaments and whose studies hardly fitted them to play a leading part in a great crisis, she had many others who had raised themselves to distinction in the field, in the Senate, and in the public service. M. Thiers was exercising a profound influence by his knowledge, his

patriotism, and his oratory. M. Lamartine, during his brief administration, had impressed the charm of his genius on the nation; and M. Cavaignac had won many adherents by his ability and his character. In addition to these, Marshal Bugeaud, the conqueror of Algeria, and General Changarnier, who held the command in Paris, had raised themselves to the front rank by their military capacity. France, therefore, was in no need of a new man. She had men of her own, of proved merit, qualified to fill the first place in her new Republic. And, till the eleventh hour, it seemed certain that the voice of France would be raised in favour of one of them. The Chamber had been just elected by universal suffrage; and M. Émile Ollivier has told us that, if the election of a president had been entrusted to the Chamber, more than two-thirds of its votes would have been cast in favour of Cavaignac.

Yet the name of Napoleon, and the memories of the First Empire, proved more potent factors than the oratory of Thiers or the character of Cavaignac. From the moment that the Prince returned to France, and took his seat in the Chamber of Deputies, his chances steadily improved. If he had not anything to offer, he was ready to offer everything. To those who had been alarmed by the outbreak of revolution he promised order; to the Catholics, the protection of religion; to the Liberals, religious liberty. He assured the friends of peace that peace was the first of his desires; he assured the patriots that his desire for peace would not prevent him from pursuing a resolute foreign policy.

"Je me dévouerai sans arrière-pensée à l'affermissement d'une république sage par ses lois, honnête par ses intentions, grande et forte par ses actes. Je mettrai mon honneur à laisser, au bout de quatre ans, à mon successeur le pouvoir affermi, la liberté intacte, un progrès réel accompli."

These assurances, made on the eve of the election, fanned the increasing enthusiasm. France, as one of the Prince's supporters afterwards explained, had such need of a Charlemagne that it was pardonable to see a Charlemagne in a Napoleon. The people, by an enormous majority, elected the Prince, and the future Emperor became President of the Republic.

If the French had preferred an unknown prince to the proved capacity of Cavaignac, their preference had not been due to any belief in Napoleon's ability. Nearly all those who were acquainted with him had formed the lowest opinion of his powers. Lord Malmesbury, who had known him for nearly twenty years, described him, in 1829, as a wild, harum-scarum youth, apparently without serious thought of any kind. Thiers said of him in 1848, "Je l'ai beaucoup étudié de près et de loin. C'est un homme absolument nul." His attempt at Strasburg and his dramatic descent on Boulogne had increased the contempt which was almost universally felt for him. We know now that the opinion which was formed of Louis Napoleon before 1848 was as erroneous as that which was formed of him after 1852. In later years, indeed, it was said with some point that he had twice deceived Europe—once by convincing men that he was a fool, and once by persuading them that he was a statesman. Posterity will not readily admit that the man who planned the *coup d'état* was a fool, but will equally hesitate to allow that the man who embarked on the Franco-German War was a statesman. The fact is that Napoleon had a genius for plot and counter-plot, which might have made the fortune of a leader of a secret society. "Rêveur et conspirateur," writes M. de la Gorce, "il le fut sur le trône et toujours."

There were, indeed, other phases in Napoleon's character which would have ensured for the man respect in almost any other capacity than that which he was called on to fill.

M. de la Gorce justly speaks of his excellent heart. He says elsewhere—

"Quelles que fussent les rigueurs de la politique, son penchant le porta presque toujours vers la clémence. Sa constante bonté lui valut quelques affections durables qui l'honorèrent, et s'honorèrent elles-mêmes par une fidélité plus forte que la disgrâce. Il eut le louable désir de la paix civile, et l'ambition de rétablir la liberté qu'il avait jadis abattue. Par-dessus tout, il aima le peuple, non pas spécialement le sien (car il était plus humanitaire que patriote), mais tous les peuples; c'est-à-dire les pauvres, les faibles, les déshérités. A la nouvelle de sa mort l'un de ses adversaires disait: 'Je l'ai combattu, mais je n'ai pu me résigner à le haïr.' Ce mot peint bien, je crois, la pensée commune: et, par une singulière indulgence, faite de compassion, faite aussi de gratitude pour une ancienne prospérité, la nation, qui a tant souffert des erreurs de son souverain, se contente de ne pas le regretter."

The better side of the Emperor's character was reflected in the lady who became his wife. The strong religious views which the Empress entertained were frequently a cause of embarrassment to her husband. Those, indeed, who have read M. Thouvenel's "Le Secret de l'Empereur" have probably risen from its perusal with the reflection that its author had no secret to disclose. But they must have been impressed by the evidence which M. Thouvenel produced of the vast influence which the Empress exerted on all questions of policy affecting the Roman Church. The Empress, however, was not merely strong in her devotion to the Church; she shared with the Emperor a genuine desire to alleviate the lot of the poor. There is a pleasant story that the municipality of Paris voted a sum of 600,000 francs to purchase her a tiara of diamonds as a wedding gift. She refused the present in these terms:—

"J'éprouve un sentiment pénible en songeant que le

premier acte public qui s'attache à mon nom au moment de mon mariage est une dépense considérable pour la ville de Paris. Vous me rendrez plus heureuse en employant en charités la somme que vous aviez fixée. Je désire que mon mariage ne soit l'occasion d'aucune charge nouvelle pour le pays auquel j'appartiens désormais : la seule chose que j'ambitionne c'est de partager avec l'Empereur l'amour et l'estime du peuple français."

We gladly dwell on these pleasant traits in the character of the Emperor and the Empress at the commencement of an essay in which we shall have little else to say in favour of the Second Empire. The better qualities of the man cannot, indeed, be allowed to condone the faults of the sovereign ; but, on the other hand, the faults of the sovereign should not wholly blind us to the better qualities of the man.

These amiable traits in the Emperor's character, however, could not redeem his fatal defects as a ruler. No man who has risen to a position of equal prominence has ever displayed so great a difficulty in making up his own mind. From the beginning to the end of his career he was incapable of decision ; and the helm of State, which he hesitated to guide, was constantly grasped by firmer men who had the merit of knowing what they wanted to do. It is this circumstance which gives so much interest to the posthumous memoirs of M. de Persigny. There is, indeed, some difficulty in forming a just appreciation of M. de Persigny's character. If we follow M. de la Gorce we shall regard him as a "personnage fantasque, dévoué, mais exigeant, tout à fait inégal à sa haute fortune." If, on the contrary, we accept M. de Persigny's own account, we shall look upon him as exercising a controlling influence. The truth possibly lies between the two extremes.

In the first days of the presidency Napoleon desired to steer a middle course. He had promised to maintain

the Republic, and he chose as his Ministers the friends of republicans, like Thiers; he placed at the head of his Government Odilon Barrot, a man whose vehement oratory would have made him—so Cobden thought—a second Bright if he had been born in England, but who in M. de Persigny's opinion was a mere puppet in Thiers's hands, a man of whom a friend sneeringly said, "No man in the whole world thinks so deeply of nothing." All that M. de Persigny could do was to associate with Thiers's friends M. de Falloux, an avowed Royalist, whose memoirs should be carefully compared with M. de Persigny's narrative. But he wished to do much more. He thought that the Prince's election should have led directly to a change of men; that the President should have surrounded himself with Ministers prepared to give effect to a new policy, and who, in their turn, should have removed almost every préfet in France.

Though M. de Persigny was unable, in the first instance, to enforce his own views on his irresolute master, he laboured vigorously to counteract the error which he conceived the Government had made in neglecting to effect a summary change of officials. He feared that the old machinery would be powerless to prevent the triumph of the Red Republicans at the coming election, and that France, at the very commencement of the presidency, would be subjected to a new Reign of Terror. Widely as the Ministers differed on other subjects from M. de Persigny, they shared his apprehensions, and they urged, as the best means of combating revolution, that Bugeaud should be brought from his command at Lyons to Paris, and made Minister of War. But, though M. de Persigny shared or inspired the apprehensions of the Ministers, he wholly dissented from the remedy which they proposed. He thought that Marshal Bugeaud, instead of being brought to Paris, should be left at Lyons, at the head of

the Army of the Alps, and that he should be instructed, if the necessity should arise, to join hands with Changarnier, who held the command in Paris, and to check, by concerted action, any popular rising.

Napoleon, so M. de Persigny thought, shared these views; but he shrank, characteristically, from formally adopting them. He contented himself with sending M. de Persigny to Lyons to confer with the Marshal. He evidently desired that the Marshal should accept the responsibility of deciding on the course to be pursued.

With such instructions—or rather without instructions—M. de Persigny left Paris on the eve of the general election. As he passed through Châlons the evident excitement of the populace convinced him that a new revolution was imminent. Groups of men ran through the streets waving the red flag, and shouting, "À bas les Blancs! Vive la république démocratique et sociale!" Lyons was in a state of disorganisation. Money had disappeared; it was not possible to cash a note. The préfet, frightened out of his senses, begged M. de Persigny to forward his resignation to the President, and to ask that his successor might at once be appointed. The news which arrived from neighbouring towns was grave.

"Ce n'était pas seulement dans la ville de Lyon et dans le département du Rhône, mais dans tous les départements voisins, que la liste des Rouges menaçait de l'emporter. Les populations . . . acclamaient partout les listes rouges. Le cri de: 'À bas les Blancs!' poussé dans les villes et dans les campagnes, bouleversait toutes les têtes."

And the first news that arrived from the polling places was equally serious.

"Les résultats officiels des élections commençaient à parvenir . . . et malheureusement à chaque dépêche, arrivant des départements voisins, c'était une nouvelle victoire de la démagogie. Après le Rhône venaient l'Ain, la Loire,

l'Isère, l'Ardèche, le Jura, la Haute-Loire, Saône-et-Loire, la Drôme, &c., toute une vaste région de la France avait acclamé les coryphées du Socialisme."

There was a wide difference between Bugeaud and de Persigny. The former had risen to fame under Louis Philippe; and his faith and hope were with the Orleanists. The latter was an Imperialist by conviction, and the personal friend of the Prince President. But both of them were imbued with a terror of the Reds, and with a conviction that their success would lead to civil war. Persigny persuaded Bugeaud that the only hope of preserving order lay in the Prince President; and Bugeaud, alarmed at the disorders in Lyons, and afraid that the excitement surging in the city would extend to his troops, decided to evacuate the town, holding only its forts, to put his whole army, scattered from the Alps to the centre of France, in motion, to concentrate it on some point between Lyons and Paris, and, joining hands with Changarnier, to prepare for crushing the democracy. Happily, perhaps, for Bugeaud's reputation, better news came from the provinces before this decision could be carried out. If Lyons and its neighbourhood had supported the Reds, the rest of France rallied to the cause of order. The movement on which Bugeaud had decided became obviously unnecessary. The orders which had been issued to the troops were countermanded; they were directed to fall back on their original positions; and the experiment of the Republic was allowed to be tried for another two years.

If M. de Persigny's account of this episode is trustworthy —and it must be remembered that it rests on his authority —it shows that, from the election of the President, there stood behind his chair a man who held no office, but who had a power greater than that of any responsible Minister —a man who saw from the first that, though the President owed his election to a plébiscite, Napoleonism rested on

force, and that force must be employed, whenever the occasion arose, to maintain it in power. This view was to receive a striking illustration at the end of 1851. Affairs at that time, it may be admitted, were in a critical position. From the summer of 1849 to the autumn of 1851 every one observed a growing tension between the President and the Assembly. Month by month it became increasingly evident that a Napoleon elected by universal suffrage, and supported by the army, was necessarily drifting towards Imperialism. Month by month it became equally plain that the Assembly, composed chiefly of Legitimists, Orleanists, and Republicans, was opposed to the drift. In May, 1850, it endeavoured to combat it by an electoral law which largely restricted the franchise. The passage of such a law constituted a direct challenge to the Prince, whose power was founded on a plébiscite. But, except for the reconstruction of the Ministry, the substitution of M. Baroche for Barrot, and the introduction into the Cabinet of men like Achille Fould and Rouher, who subsequently held high positions in the Empire, no definite step was taken till January, 1851. At the beginning of that month Changarnier, whose tendencies had previously been in doubt, and who had earned in consequence the nickname of "the Sphinx," issued an order to the army directing the troops to abstain on parade from every manifestation and from every cry. The order was avowedly occasioned by the fact that, at a recent review, the soldiers had received the President with the shout, "Vive Napoléon!" and Changarnier was at once removed by the President himself from the command of the Army of Paris.

The removal of Changarnier was the first act of overt war between the President and the Assembly; and, by placing the Army of Paris under Baraguay d'Hilliers, a soldier in whom the President could confide, it led indirectly to the *coup d'état*. During the whole of 1851 the

President was preparing for this event, and towards the end of October he precipitated matters by nominating a new Ministry of his own—by placing M. de Maupas over the police, and St. Arnaud at the head of the War Office —and by demanding the repeal of the electoral law of 1850. The obvious disinclination of the Chambers to do his bidding gave some sort of justification for what followed. On the night of December 2nd the most prominent statesmen and generals in Paris were arrested in their beds. On the following morning Paris awoke to find the streets covered with placards, announcing the dissolution of the Assembly, the institution of universal suffrage, and the approaching election of a President for a term of ten years. Troops, carefully stationed at central positions, controlled the streets, and prevented the assembling of the Chambers. The Deputies who endeavoured to meet elsewhere were summarily arrested. Before the dawn of December 3rd two hundred and thirty-five of the representatives of the people, including twelve statesmen of Cabinet rank, were in prison. Before the following day had closed Paris ran red with blood. Resistance in the provinces was subsequently stamped out with the ferocity which had been displayed in Paris.

"None will ever know," wrote Kinglake, "the number of men who at this period were either killed or imprisoned in France, or sent to die in Africa or Cayenne; but the panegyrist of Louis Bonaparte and his fellow-plotters acknowledges that the number of people who were seized and transported within the few weeks which followed the 2nd of December amounted to the enormous number of twenty-six thousand five hundred."

We do not forget that Louis Napoleon's conduct was approved by Lord Palmerston, and that it was subsequently condoned by a vote of the French people, when we record our deliberate opinion that the *coup d'état* was a

great crime. There may be occasions of national emergency when it may be the duty of those who are responsible for the safety of a State to arrogate to themselves unconstitutional powers, but nothing that had occurred in France in 1851 justified such a usurpation. No doubt a serious tension existed between the President and the Assembly; no doubt the peculiar Constitution of 1848, which omitted to entrust the President with the power of dissolution, created some embarrassment; but the head of the State was the last person in France who should have encountered the evils of civil war for the purpose of terminating the crisis. It might have been his duty to resist the attacks of others, but nothing could justify his attacking the Constitution himself.

M. de Persigny has the merit to conceal in his "Memoirs" the precise part which he may have taken personally in the *coup d'état*, and he has shown elsewhere so clear a desire to arrogate to himself the credit, or discredit, of the various measures by which Napoleon rose to the throne, that perhaps we may absolve him of direct responsibility and say, with Kinglake, that the hand of Persigny was not the hand employed to execute the measures of the Elysée. But, if we may acquit him of complicity in the crime of 1851, we have his own confession that he took a leading part in introducing the Empire. The story is usually told that the préfet of Bourges, where Napoleon slept on an autumn progress in 1852, gave the people instructions to shout "Vive Napoléon!" But it is added that he wrote "Vive Napoléon!!!" and that the people, mistaking the three notes of admiration for a numeral, hailed the Prince as "Napoléon III." But the story reads very differently in M. de Persigny's pages. M. de Persigny declares that, on the eve of the President's journey, he asked the Cabinet for definite instructions as to the policy which he should

pursue during the progress. "What instructions can you want?" asked his colleagues. "We are on the eve of a great crisis," Persigny answered. "The people have been saved from the dangers of anarchy; they will probably show their enthusiasm in their cries. Suppose they raise a shout of 'Vive l'Empereur!'" The Cabinet at these words was in positive uproar. They rose from their seats, broke into small groups, and angrily asked M. de Persigny if he wanted civil war. Napoleon himself was agitated by the unexpected scene. He deprecated any desire for change, and any attempt to bring about any unconstitutional demonstration. M. de Persigny seemed entirely isolated. Napoleon had emphatically disapproved his counsel. His colleagues asked him whether he did not intend to resign.

Instead, however, of resigning, Persigny pondered over the situation. He had no doubt that the people, on the one hand, were expecting and desiring the restoration of the Empire, and that, among the cheers with which Napoleon would be greeted, isolated cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" would be heard. But he had also no doubt that the authorities, left without instructions, would feel it their duty to suppress these cries, which would accordingly be drowned in the more general shout of "Vive la République!" So thinking, on the eve of Napoleon's journey, he decided on sending for the préfets of the departments which Napoleon would reach first; and as M. Abbatucci, the Minister of Justice, was the personal friend of the préfet of the Loire, he passed him over and summoned M. Pastoureau, the préfet of the Cher, the department in which Bourges is situated.

M. de Persigny thus describes his interview with Pastoureau:—

"There is a train," he began, "leaving Paris for Bourges in an hour. Take care to catch it. Resume your duties

without seeing any one here, and without letting a soul know your secret instructions. These instructions are, 'L'Empire!' 'Vive l'Empereur!' And let us not make a mistake. The Duke de Reichstadt never reigned. But he was proclaimed Emperor by his father. Render, then, this homage to the memory of a great man, and announce the nephew as Napoleon III. I have already told you to summon all the municipalities of your department. Set in hand, without losing a moment, flags inscribed 'Vive l'Empereur!' on one side and 'Vive Napoléon III.!' on the other. Place the same inscriptions on the triumphal arches under which the Prince will pass. Preserve the utmost secrecy in these preparations, and, when the day comes, telegraph to me, from hour to hour, all that occurs."

The préfet was electrified by these instructions. He assumed—as he well might assume—that they were the orders of the Government. He returned to give effect to them; and, as he telegraphed the details of the Prince's reception and the enthusiastic cries which had greeted Napoleon III., M. de Persigny at once communicated the news to the rest of the departments. The electric telegraph was used to galvanise France into enthusiasm for the Second Empire.

If it be really true that M. de Persigny issued these orders to the préfet without the knowledge of, or rather in defiance of, the wishes of the President and his own colleagues, we can only say that he took upon himself a graver responsibility than any other public man incurred in the nineteenth century. The mere fact that he judged the situation more correctly than others, and that France approved by a plébiscite the proclamation of the Empire, cannot condone the disloyalty of his conduct. And, if his narrative be correct, he was guilty immediately afterwards of a less important but similar treachery. The crown had

been firmly set on Napoleon's brow; but it was still necessary to gild it; and the Cabinet, at the suggestion of M. Fould and with the approval of the Emperor, agreed to propose a civil list of 12,000,000 fr. (£480,000) a year. M. de Persigny from the first thought the proposal a mistake. Louis Philippe had received a civil list of 18,000,000 fr. The civil list of Louis XVI. had amounted to 25,000,000 fr. Fifty millions in 1853 was, in M. de Persigny's judgment, the equivalent of 25,000,000 fr. in the latter half of the eighteenth century; and a civil list of 12,000,000 fr., therefore, was practically only one-fourth the sum which had been thought necessary to support the dignity of Louis XVI. The Cabinet, however, adhered to M. Fould's proposal. The Emperor himself, when M. de Persigny approached him on the subject, declined to allow him to reopen the question. And the matter was apparently settled.

Nothing, however, was ever settled when M. de Persigny was opposed to the decision, and on this occasion, as on the more important one to which we have already referred, "a sudden thought" came across his brain and suggested a new act of treachery. The Senate was on the eve of meeting, and M. de Persigny summoned his carriage and drove to the Senate. He met M. Troplong, its president, at the entrance, holding in his hands the proposal for 12,000,000 fr. M. Troplong had been present at the Cabinet at which this amount had been agreed upon, and had rather feebly supported M. de Persigny's more liberal suggestion. M. de Persigny now assured him that his arguments had had a wonderful effect on the Emperor, who had come round to the larger view and consented to the 25,000,000 fr. M. Troplong accepted M. de Persigny's assurance, entered an adjoining room, and altered the amount. Within a few hours the civil list of 25,000,000 fr. was voted by the Senate.

If this story be true, it affords striking proof of the unscrupulous character of one, at least, of the men who stood round Napoleon's throne. But we hesitate to accept it on the testimony of a man who charges himself with a gross lie. We cannot but think that M. de Persigny, on this occasion at any rate, was less guilty than his confession makes him appear, and that the message which he carried to the president of the Senate was delivered with the approval, or at any rate with the knowledge, of the Emperor.

Through plot and bloodshed, falsehood and treachery, Napoleon had now reached the goal of his ambition. President, Emperor, Napoleon III., he had it all—all that his brooding imagination had ever contemplated. But the hardest portion of his work was still before him. He had to live up to the name which had won him the throne; and this was the very thing which he was unlikely to be able to do. It is said that Jerome Bonaparte once said to him, "You have nothing of the Emperor about you;" and that the Emperor replied, "You are mistaken, my dear uncle: I have his family." In all other respects the new Emperor had none of the qualities which distinguished the old. What talents he possessed had already been displayed in the plots and intrigues which had procured his elevation. We might almost thenceforward apply to him Carlyle's saying of Brienne, "It took such talent and industry to gain the place that to qualify for it hardly any talent or industry was left disposable."

It was obvious, too, that no little ability was required to place the new Emperor in a firm position. The excitement of the moment had procured his elevation to the throne; but the recollection of the *coup d'état* could not be permanently obliterated. "It was necessary," as Kinglake put it, "to distract France from thinking of her shame at home by sending her attention abroad." The

Emperor, indeed, to do him justice, was probably opposed to war. He endeavoured to reassure the Continent by his striking declaration, "L'Empire, c'est la paix," and he tried to reconcile the people to his rule by inaugurating a system of public works, which almost involved the reconstruction of Paris and the embellishment of every provincial town. He had the good fortune to find in M. Haussmann an administrator who was prepared to carry out his sovereign's suggestions at any cost. We are not now going to criticise a policy which, on the one hand, covered France with works of which she is naturally proud, but, on the other, crippled her with an expenditure which has left an enduring mark on her finances. We content ourselves with recording M. de la Gorce's pregnant saying of M. Haussmann, "De toutes les créations du Second Empire, la sienne est presque la seule qui ait complètement survécu."

But, however much the Emperor may have hoped to avoid the necessity of war by occupying the people at home, events proved too strong for him. In Great Britain, indeed, apprehensions were everywhere entertained that a new Napoleon would endeavour to avenge the defeat of the First Empire by reversing the verdict of Waterloo. But, though genuine alarm was felt both by statesmen and people in this country, perhaps there was never any great danger of a conflict with France at that time. In the first place, most of Napoleon's advisers realised the grave risks of attacking a country which was predominant at sea; and, in the next place, Napoleon himself, during his long exile, had formed many friendships in England, and was reluctant to quarrel with a country whose power he had learned to respect and whose hospitality he had enjoyed. Some other issue had to be discovered which the strength of France could be employed to determine. There was one cause in which popularity could obviously be acquired

France was both a religious and a Catholic country, and the party of order, which had rallied to Napoleon's support, was precisely that which was most anxious to sustain the interests of the Church. Already, at the commencement of his presidency, Napoleon had resolved on that occupation of Rome which—with one short interval—was destined to continue till the closing months of his reign. In the East, however, questions were arising of almost as great interest to devout Roman Catholics as the maintenance of the temporal authority of the Pope. In 1740 France had acquired, by treaty with the Porte, the right of protecting the Holy Places at Jerusalem. But an age which was reading Voltaire, and which was preparing the Revolution of 1789, cared comparatively little for the right which it had thus obtained; and, as time went on, Russia succeeded in extracting from the Porte several promises inconsistent with the privilege which had been accorded to France. These discordant concessions, however, had attracted little attention till the French ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to demand the strict execution of the arrangements of 1740. The Sultan was thus placed in a position of great difficulty. He could not comply with the demands of France without withdrawing the concessions which he had made to Russia. Throughout 1852 he endeavoured to gain time. But before the year closed the persistence of the French compelled him to yield; and this concession, profoundly irritating to Russia, induced the Czar to strengthen his armies on the Turkish frontier, and, in the beginning of 1853, to despatch Prince Mentschikoff on a special mission to the Porte.

We have neither space nor inclination to describe the negotiations which followed, or the events of the terrible war which interrupted the forty years' peace. If the Crimean War was justifiable, there is no necessity for defending the Emperor's conduct. If, on the contrary, it

was both a mistake and a crime, France and her Emperor were not the only criminals. In connection, however, with what we have already said it is interesting to observe how largely M. de Persigny was responsible for the rupture. He was the one of Napoleon's advisers who desired to resent the foolish conduct of the Czar in addressing the Emperor, after his accession to the throne, as "Monsieur et bon ami," instead of as "Monsieur mon frère;" and, later on, he was the Minister who—against the advice of all his colleagues—induced Napoleon to take the decisive step of ordering the French fleet to Salamis. It is worth while also observing that, if the results of the war were not commensurate with the exertions which it called forth, and the sacrifices which it necessitated, the one man in Europe who gained most from the struggle was the Emperor himself.

"Les vrais fruits de la victoire," writes M. de la Gorce with great justice, "c'étaient la nouvelle consécration de son nom, l'impuissance désormais avérée des partis, et par-dessus tout, aux yeux de l'Europe comme de la France, la légitimation de son avènement."

The months which followed the close of the war, in fact, saw the zenith of Napoleon's career. He had succeeded, so far, in all he had attempted. He had raised himself and his country to the first rank among sovereigns and nations. He had conquered his enemies abroad, he had stifled opposition in France. He had apparently persuaded his people that a benevolent despotism was the best of all possible governments; and with increasing prosperity at home, with peace assured abroad, he had almost induced them to forget the liberties which they had lost.

For some years, indeed, after the conclusion of the Crimean War the position of France and the power of the Emperor remained undisturbed. Armed to the teeth, the country was regarded as the most formidable of Con-

tinental nations. The peace of Europe, to all appearances, depended on the will of her sovereign, the undisputed master of her legions. Yet Napoleon himself could hardly have been deceived by the circumstances which alarmed the European world. He must have been conscious of increasing difficulties both at home and abroad. At home the elections of 1857 resulted in the return of an Opposition, small indeed in numbers but fertile in resources, whose growing strength ultimately compelled the Emperor to introduce large and liberal innovations into his system of government. Abroad the persistence of Count Cavour was gradually forcing the claims of Italy into prominence and compelling the Emperor to assume an attitude which was destined to drive him into a new war.

Many reasons, both public and private, induced the Emperor to hesitate before finally determining to throw in his lot with Piedmont. The policy of Cavour was directly opposed to the cause of Rome; and the Emperor, both on public and private grounds, had every desire to keep on good terms with the Pope. The attitude of religious France, the views of the Empress, were equally opposed to a quarrel with the head of the Catholic Church; and the Emperor himself was aware that the support of the Pope would impart strength to his own throne, and improve the prospects of his son's succession. French statesmen, moreover, were disposed to regard the consolidation of Italy as unfavourable to the interests of France. It was the tradition of the Foreign Office that their country should be surrounded by weak neighbours, and they considered it a mere act of madness to further the creation of a second Prussia behind the Alps. In addition to these weighty reasons there was a practical difficulty in insisting on the non-intervention of Austria in Italian affairs. For, if Austrian troops were occupying the States of the Church, French troops were holding Rome itself; and, as Lord

Clarendon adroitly reminded Cavour in 1856, if Piedmont was determined to protest against Austrian action, how could she avoid following up her protest by denouncing the French occupation of Rome?

If a man with either less ability or more scruples than Cavour had presided over the Ministry at Turin, these reasons would probably have prevented the Franco-Austrian war of 1859. But no arguments and no difficulties ever weighed with Cavour against his resolute determination to make his own country supreme in Italy. The first decisive step which he took in this direction was taken when he prevailed on the Western allies to accept the assistance of Piedmont in the Crimea. Though France and England refused to pledge themselves to ulterior measures in return for this assistance, Cavour succeeded in establishing, by his action, a strong claim on their future goodwill. And this claim was recognised by the admission of Piedmont to the Congress, summoned after the war, at Paris, while Cavour gained at it the further advantage of securing an informal discussion of the condition of Italy. These successes raised Cavour in the eyes of Europe, and placed the Italian question on a new basis. But Cavour probably attached still more importance to the unofficial expressions of sympathy and support which he obtained from the Emperor both before and after the Congress. "Tell Walewski in confidence," so the Emperor said to the Piedmontese Minister before the Congress met, "what you think I can do for Italy." He added, after the Congress was over, "I cannot at the present moment make war upon Austria. But do not distress yourself; I have a conviction that peace will not last long."

It is probable that the Emperor at the time meant little by these expressions. Habitually irresolute, he certainly had not made up his mind to risk all the consequences of a fresh war. But his words naturally induced Cavour to

persevere in his policy. In the early months of 1857 the Piedmontese Minister encouraged the formation of the Société Nationale Italienne, a society which openly advocated the cause of Italy in Piedmont, and secretly enrolled its supporters in Lombardy and Venetia. The society, or Cavour, influenced the press both in Piedmont and in Europe. Attention was thus everywhere directed to the wrongs of Italy, and the Minister lost no opportunity of pressing its cause on the Emperor, on whose decision the whole issue seemed to depend.

Matters were thus slowly progressing when Orsini made his horrible attempt on the Emperor's life. Orsini was an Italian refugee ; he had laid his infamous plans in this country ; and the French press and the French colonels loudly complained that, under the pretext of hospitality, an allied nation should afford shelter to assassins. Lord Palmerston, who was at the height of his power, was driven from office because he was supposed to have insufficiently resented the complaint. But London was not the only capital in Europe which was affording shelter to Italian refugees. In no country were they more numerous than in the kingdom of Sardinia. A journal, moreover, published in Piedmont had the hardihood to excuse Orsini's crime. Walewski, the French Foreign Minister, demanded the suppression of the paper, and invited the Government of Piedmont to provide for the security of mankind. Frenchmen of all parties besought the Emperor to abandon the ungrateful people who repaid his kindness with murder. And M. de Hübner, the Austrian Minister at Paris, declared that the moment was come for forming a strict alliance between France and Austria. Thus for a few weeks statesmen seemed justified in thinking that all Cavour's hopes and preparations had been destroyed by Orsini's outrage. The understanding between France and Piedmont, so carefully prepared by Cavour, was apparently

shattered by the explosion of Orsini's bombs. But it is the unforeseen which constantly happens in history. In undertaking Orsini's defence Jules Favre did not attempt to deny the crime; but he endeavoured to excuse it by representing the assassin as a martyr, laying down his life for the cause of Italy; and he concluded his defence by reading a letter from Orsini to the Emperor, in which the murderer made a strong appeal to his intended victim.

"J'adjure votre Majesté de rendre à l'Italie l'indépendance que ses enfants ont perdue en 1849 par la faute même des Français. Que votre Majesté se rappelle que les Italiens, au milieu desquels était mon père, versèrent avec joie leur sang pour Napoléon le Grand, partout où il lui plut de les conduire; qu'elle se rappelle que tant que l'Italie ne sera pas indépendante, la tranquillité de l'Europe et celle de votre Majesté ne seront qu'une chimère. Que votre Majesté ne repousse pas le vœu suprême d'un patriote sur les marches de l'échafaud; qu'elle délivre ma patrie, et les bénédictions de vingt-cinq millions de citoyens la suivront dans la postérité."

The testament of Orsini—as Jules Favre called it at the time—followed up, as it was, by a second letter to the Emperor on the eve of his execution, made an extraordinary impression. The Emperor himself was profoundly moved by the appeal which had been made to him. Whether in his earlier days he had been the "complice des libéraux Italiens," whether as such he recognised that his old fellow-conspirators had special claims on him in his new position, or whether he was simply unnerved by the horrible nature of the attempt on his life, and alarmed at the possibility of its repetition—these are questions to which it is impossible to give a decisive answer. What is certain is that the very attempt, which seemed at first to have destroyed the Franco-Piedmontese alliance, drew France and Piedmont still more closely together, and that Orsini's letters in

February were followed by the secret meeting of Cavour and Napoleon at Plombières in June.

Even in the life of the third Napoleon few incidents are more discreditable than the details of this famous interview. The most powerful of European sovereigns, and the ablest of European statesmen, deliberately devised a pretext for attacking Austria. With equal deliberation they decided what Piedmont should receive and what she should give up. They rearranged the map of Italy and the boundaries of Southern France; while one, at least, of the two men fixed on the actual date at which this conspiracy should take effect. Napoleon, indeed, pursued for some months after Plombières a policy of concealment, which made it impossible for statesmen to divine his true intentions. He half persuaded Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon, who visited him at Compiègne during the autumn, that peace would be undisturbed. And though, on the first day of 1859, he startled the world by his famous complaint to M. de Hübner, the Austrian Ambassador at Paris—"Je regrette que nos relations avec votre gouvernement ne soient plus aussi bonnes que par le passé"[1]—and though he sanctioned, or rather inspired, the famous pamphlet "Napoléon III. et l'Italie," he repeated, in February, in opening the French Legislature, the promise of his reign, "L'Empire c'est la paix," and he readily grasped at the good offices of this country to arrange possible terms with Austria. But the negotiations which ensued were, from the first, destined to fail. The question of peace or war rested with the Emperor; and the Emperor, at Plombières,

[1] This is the accepted account of the incident. But we have it from one, to whom Count Hübner related the affair, that the Emperor's words, whatever they were, were not intended, and not understood, to convey a threat. They were, however, overheard, and misunderstood, by the Secretary to another Embassy, who immediately reported to his Government, and put in public circulation, the phrase—with the menacing signification—that alarmed all Europe.

had placed himself in the hands of the statesman who was resolved on war, and who was determined that Napoleon should not forego the engagements which he had made.

The Emperor, when he went to war in 1859, had a clear idea of what he intended to accomplish. He desired a free, but he had no wish for a united, Italy. He was willing that Piedmont should extend from the Alps to the Adriatic, on the sole condition that the French slopes of the Alps should be ceded to France. But he had no inclination to disturb the existing arrangements either in Central or Southern Italy. France, strengthened by the addition of Savoy and Nice, could view with equanimity an extended Piedmont. But neither France nor her ruler had any relish for a united Italy, with twenty-six millions of inhabitants, on her south-eastern frontier.

The ideas which the Emperor had formed found expression at Villafranca. Alarmed at the rumours of Prussian intervention and the movements of Prussian troops to the Rhine, he thought himself compelled to stop halfway in his march to the Adriatic; but, in other respects, he gave effect to the ideas with which he had commenced the campaign. He arranged that the Italian States should be formed into a confederation under the honorary presidency of the Pope; he surrendered Lombardy, which he received from Austria, to his Piedmontese ally; and with some generosity he forbore from exacting the price of his assistance—the incorporation of Savoy and Nice in France. He thought, in fact, that, as he had only given Piedmont one-half the extension which he had foreshadowed at Plombières, he was not entitled to any portion of the reward which he had stipulated should be paid to him on the completion of his whole programme.

In truth, Napoleon rose to his zenith on the day on which he signed this famous treaty. He had never before, he never again, attained so striking a position. For on

that day he stood, beyond dispute, the most powerful man in Europe. He had gone to war for an idea, but for an idea which found favour with all that was best in liberal Europe; he had defeated the army which was supposed to be the most highly organised on the Continent; and he had displayed a moderation in victory which was as creditable to him as his success in arms. Thenceforward it seemed certain that no great change could be effected on the map of Europe without his concurrence. Thenceforward the statesmen of Europe thought it their first business to endeavour to fathom his thoughts, and to forecast his intentions. Even in this country the sense of the power which he had displayed on the battlefield created the panic which Lord Palmerston did so much to encourage, and which Mr. Cobden vainly endeavoured to allay. We sometimes forget that the great Volunteer movement, which has done, and is doing, so much for England, was due to the impression produced by the campaign which was concluded at Villafranca.

Yet at that very moment, when the Emperor might have been forgiven for thinking that fate had declared itself in his favour, and that he might safely rely on the destiny which was still before him, the tide which had borne him to fame and fortune was already turning. During the eleven years in which he had occupied the first place in the French Republic and Empire, everything had gone well with him. France had enjoyed an increasing prosperity which was reflected in the new boulevards, new streets, new buildings which were being constructed not only in Paris, but in almost every provincial town. Whatever opinion might be formed of the autocratic government which the Emperor had established, there was no doubt that France, as a whole, had derived advantage from the good order which resulted from his rule. The mere fact that he was on the throne, receiving and repaying the

visits of contemporary sovereigns, was a proof that he had triumphed over the traditions of 1815, and over the prejudices of European Courts. The birth of a son had apparently given fresh stability to the Empire, and had given his people a new interest in his dynasty. And yet the writing was already on the wall, if any Daniel had been there to read it. The very campaign which had just concluded so successfully, the very arrangements which he had dictated at Villafranca, were to involve him in difficulties and embarrassments from which he was never to extricate himself. For, if Villafranca saw the Emperor at the height of his power, it saw the commencement of his fall. And in Italy, to use M. de la Gorce's striking language, the fate of the Second Empire was sealed.

In the first place, powerful as he had proved himself on the battlefield, the Emperor was unable to give effect to the arrangements which he had made. He had set a flood in motion which he could not control, and Italy was enabled, in defiance of his will, to carry out the settlement on which she had set her heart. The Emperor had decided that Central Italy should take back her old rulers; and Central Italy showed an increasing disinclination to do anything of the kind. Had the Emperor been endowed with the resolution of Count Cavour, or with the iron determination of Prince Bismarck, he would have insisted on the conditions which he had laid down at Villafranca being fulfilled. No power in Italy could have withstood his will if he had had the courage to enforce it. But Prince Napoleon had told the Emperor of Austria that France would not suffer force to be used to effect the restoration of duke or grand duke. And Lord John Russell was always asking for some definite pledge that France would not employ herself the force which she had refused to allow Austria to exert. Short of force, however, nothing could

restore the old system which the Italian campaign had destroyed. There was literally no mean between marching troops into Tuscany and the adoption of Lord John Russell's policy of leaving the Italians to settle their own affairs for themselves. As the months wore on after Villafranca it was accordingly evident that a great military success was likely to be followed by a great diplomatic reverse. The Central States of Italy, against the will of the Emperor, and in defiance of his orders, were, one after another, throwing in their lot with Piedmont; and the Emperor, pledged not to allow Austrian interference, and reluctant to discredit the whole of his Italian policy by employing the arms of France against the Italians, was compelled to stand by and see Northern and Central Italy consolidate themselves against his will. The Emperor was learning for the first time that the doctrine of Nationalities, which it had been so convenient to raise was very difficult to control. He endeavoured to cover his failure by acquiring fresh boundaries for his own Empire. We do not wish to condemn, if we cannot wholly excuse, the annexation of Nice and Savoy. It was not altogether unreasonable on the Emperor's part to maintain that, if Savoy and Nice were the price which Piedmont had agreed to pay for the extension of her kingdom to the Adriatic, the forfeiture should be exacted if a larger and more populous territory than Venetia were added to Victor Emmanuel's dominions in Central Italy. But if, from this point of view, the annexation of Savoy and Nice was excusable, there is no doubt that the act itself increased the Emperor's difficulties. Nothing in his career had done him such good service as the close alliance which he had formed with this country. He was ready to make large sacrifices to maintain the friendly relations with England which he had satisfied himself formed a strong guarantee for the permanence of his rule. And

the annexation of Savoy and Nice deprived him, at a single stroke, of this advantage. He never recovered from the effect of the suspicions which the act excited; he never completely regained the confidence of the Prime Minister of England, or the goodwill of the English people. They felt that he had entered on a new policy of extending the bounds of his Empire which might, in the near future, be productive of results opposed to the peace of Europe and the best interests of England.

The course of events, moreover, increased the embarrassments in which the Emperor had been involved in the closing months of 1859 by the attitude of Central Italy, and in which he had involved himself in the opening months of 1860 by the annexation of Nice and Savoy. For, before this controversy was settled, the action of Garibaldi in invading Sicily raised a new issue which could not be otherwise than disquieting to the Emperor. He tried again to stem the tide which was running steadily against him; and if he had had his own will would have prevented Garibaldi from crossing the Straits of Messina. But this country, through Lord John Russell, kept on repeating the eternal conclusion that Italy should be left free to settle its own affairs, and the Emperor hesitated to act alone or against the opinion of the ally whose friendship he still desired to preserve. He contented himself with stationing a French fleet at Gaeta to afford a possible refuge for the King of Naples. And this policy only emphasised the failure of his diplomacy. For France, and indeed Europe, received an object-lesson of the Emperor's incapacity. He showed himself opposed to the union of Southern and Northern Italy, yet powerless to prevent it; the crowning act—the capture of Gaeta—was actually accomplished in the presence of the French fleet.

This discomfiture was preceded by an occurrence still

more fatal to the prestige of the Empire. The Piedmontese Cabinet considered that it could only prevent Garibaldi's march on Rome by itself invading the Roman provinces. Rome, however, was occupied by a French garrison ; the Pope had enlisted in his support volunteers from every Catholic nation ; and a French officer, General Lamoricière, had been permitted, against the strong advice of some of Napoleon's own counsellors, to assume the command of the contingent. Thus the invasion of the Romagna involved an attack upon territory whose capital was occupied by a French garrison, and whose frontiers were defended by a force commanded by a French officer. Such a proceeding seemed so dishonourable to France that her Foreign Minister, M. Thouvenel, wished the Emperor to despatch an ultimatum to Turin ; and the Duc de Gramont, the French Ambassador at Rome, inferring that M. Thouvenel spoke the mind of the Emperor, told the Papal Government that the Emperor would not tolerate Piedmontese aggression. The Emperor was thus committed by his agents to the defence of the Pope, and the defeat of the Papal troops seemed to emphasise his inability to resist the march of the Piedmontese. The sovereign of Northern Italy, who knew his own mind, and who was supported by his Minister, defied at every turn the powerful Emperor, who was vibrating between resolution and irresolution, and whose Ministers were unable either to guide or influence their master. Italy, so the Emperor had decided, should not be united, and the union of Italy was practically complete. Rome, so the Emperor had promised, should be defended against aggression, and the Pope had been stripped of his richest provinces by the Piedmontese soldiery.

The discredit into which the Emperor thus fell weakened his authority, and his treatment of the Pope exposed him

to severe criticism. Both in the inner circle of the Emperor's Court and in French society there was a difference of opinion on the events which had been thus accomplished. At Court the Empress was passionately devoted to the cause of the Pope, while Prince Napoleon was equally zealous for the union of Italy. The Empress, on the one side, endowed with all the religious fervour of her race, could not even contemplate the desertion of the head of her Church in the hour of his necessity. "Mort soit, Rome jamais," was her comment on the report that Garibaldi was inviting the Italians to bind themselves under the oath "Roma o morte." But, if the Empress was inspired with a passionate desire to save the head of her Church, Prince Napoleon was actuated by at least as strong a determination to extend the rule of his father-in-law. The government of the Pope, so the Prince openly argued in the Senate, was unworthy, effete, and did not deserve a defence. United Italy, moreover, was in need of Rome, and Rome must be surrendered to it. This was the policy which the Emperor ought to pursue, and this was the policy which the Prince believed, notwithstanding all the assurances to the contrary, he would ultimately adopt.

The contrary views which were thus pressed on the Emperor by his wife and his cousin found expression in the country. Catholic and Conservative France—the France to which the Emperor owed his throne, and on whose support he relied for the maintenance of his dynasty—warmly espoused the cause which the Empress was unceasingly pleading. Liberal France, on the contrary—the France which was still suffering from the extinction of liberty and the repression of opinion—as eagerly adopted the views of the Prince. The Emperor found himself in this dilemma. If he listened to the Prince he exposed himself to the tears of his wife and the

reproaches of his supporters. If he attended to the Empress he was liable to be charged with abandoning the cause for which 30,000 French soldiers had laid down their lives in 1859.[1] A stronger man than the Emperor would have resolutely faced the difficulties of the situation, and have definitely decided on the policy to be pursued. But the Emperor, as usual, always shrank from arriving at a decision on the day which he could defer till the morrow. He could not bring himself either to abandon the Pope or to impose a distinct veto on the aggression of the Italians. His vacillating and uncertain policy secured the support of neither Turin nor Rome, and offended both. The Italians complained that the Emperor's attitude was preventing them from crowning the edifice of a United Italy by giving her Rome as her capital. The Papal Government complained that the presence of a French garrison had prevented it having recourse to other assistance, and had not preserved it from the loss of its territory.[2]

The Emperor, moreover, was confronted with another difficulty, an indirect legacy of the Italian campaign. In Italy he was the champion of liberty; in France he was the head of an autocratic government. He was practising one principle at home and advocating another abroad. The dilemma which he was thus preparing for himself was pointed out on the eve of the Italian war. "You are compromising," said M. Plichon in the French Chamber, "the internal tranquillity of France. For you cannot be

[1] In a remarkable interview which he had with M. de Falloux in 1860, the Emperor explained his difficulties by saying, "I have always been bound to the cause of Italy, and it is impossible for me to turn my guns upon her" (Memoirs of M. de Falloux, ii. 226).

[2] Cardinal Antonelli, on being congratulated on the dismissal of M. Thouvenel, who was in favour of the French troops evacuating Rome at a definite date, replied: "Non; c'est alors que nous commençons à trembler. Ce sont nos amis qu'on chargera de nous exécuter" ("Le Secret de l'Empereur," ii. 439, *note*).

revolutionary in Italy and remain conservative at home." "If you are going to crush the despotic rule of Austria," said M. Jules Favre on the same occasion, "my heart, my blood, my life are at your service. But when the victory has been won, I shall claim from the conqueror that he will concede to his own people the liberties which he will have restored to another nation."

Perhaps the Emperor was himself conscious of the inconsistency of giving liberal institutions to Italy while denying them to France. Perhaps, as M. Ollivier hints, he was a little weary of the burden of empire and anxious to shift some of the load on to other shoulders. Perhaps he was anxious to devote to the Life of Cæsar some of the hours which he had hitherto reserved for affairs. At any rate, he decided to give his Legislature a little more power. Verily there seemed no risk in such a step. The election of 1857 had returned only five men ("Les Cinq," as they were called) who were avowedly in favour of a more liberal system of government. The two men who rapidly became the chief exponents of the five were M. Jules Favre, who was already known as a capable orator both in the Legislature and at the Bar, and M. Émile Ollivier, who was destined to rise to the first place in the Emperor's counsels on the eve of his fall. In the sessions of 1857, 1858, 1859, and 1860, the five, under M. Ollivier's guidance, had shown considerable skill in criticising the autocratic measures of the Emperor without transgressing the rules of debate. They had been encouraged in their difficult task by the sympathy of M. de Morny, the President of the Chamber, who was slowly arriving at the conclusion that the Legislature might safely be entrusted with a larger measure of responsibility. M. de Morny's parentage—he was the half-brother of the Emperor—gave him ready access to the Emperor's ear. He prevailed on the Emperor to accord to the Legislature a little more liberty

of discussion, and to formulate the decree of November 24, 1860, the foundation-stone of l'Empire Libéral. This decree (1) restored the Address to the Throne at the opening of each session, and thus afforded the Opposition an opportunity of criticising every salient point in the policy of the Government; (2) it directed the publication in the *Journal Officiel* of authorised official reports of the proceedings of the Sénate and the Legislative Assembly, and thus brought the delegates into touch with the people; (3) it undertook that the Emperor should be represented, and that his measures should be defended, in the Chambers by Ministers without portfolios.

"Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte." Almost exactly a year after the publication of this decree, the Emperor took another and still more significant step. On November 15, 1861, he announced his intention to reorganise the financial arrangements of the Empire, and to surrender the right which he had hitherto exercised of opening supplementary credits when the Legislature was not sitting. This concession was even more striking than that which preceded it. For the men who control the purse will, in the long run, govern the country. Napoleon, indeed, found it necessary to disregard his own promise almost as soon as he had given it. The necessities of the Mexican expedition induced or compelled him to raise a supplementary credit of 35,000,000 fr. (£1,400,000) without the authority of the Legislature. But this illegal action, of course, strengthened the hands of the Opposition. It gave M. Ollivier himself the opportunity of declaring that the true method of preventing irregularity was to make the Minister responsible to the Legislature. It was a striking sign of the progress which had been made that constitutional government and a responsible ministry should have been openly demanded in the autocratic Chamber which had been elected in 1857.

At the time at which the demand was raised both parties were making elaborate efforts in preparation for a fresh election. The general election of 1863 was fought in very different circumstances from those which had existed during the general election of 1857. In 1857 there was a general disinclination among Liberals to engage in politics; in 1863 there was as general an interest in the progress of affairs. In 1857 the Liberals had experienced difficulty in finding candidates; in 1863 their chief difficulty consisted in deciding among many candidates who were the most competent to stand. In 1857 Paris had with some hesitation returned five Liberals. In 1863 the five and their allies swept every constituency in the French capital. In the provinces, indeed, the machinery at the disposal of the Government enabled it to prevail over the attacks of the Liberals and the discontent of the Church. But the whole aspect of the Chamber was altered by the elections of 1863. An obscure group of five members had developed into a party; and the opposition which this party was preparing was facilitated by the concessions which the Emperor had himself made: by the decree of November, 1860, and the financial reforms of November, 1861. The elections of 1863—so wrote M. de Morny—had left the Emperor and the democracy face to face.

Conscious of the great change which had, almost silently, been effected in the principle on which his government was founded, the Emperor himself set his mark upon it by changing his machinery. No man had served him more faithfully than M. de Persigny; no man had struggled harder to win victory in 1863. If he had failed to make any impression on Paris, no man had done more to ensure the victory of Imperialism in the provinces. In throwing himself into the struggle, M. de Persigny had adopted a policy in which he firmly believed. This policy was based

on the principle that Ministers should be responsible to the Emperor alone; and M. Ollivier was already demanding—and the electors were supporting the demand—that they should be responsible to Parliament. The Emperor marked his sense of the change by removing M. de Persigny from office. At the same time he replaced the Ministers without portfolios—who had been appointed under the decree of 1860—by a Minister of State, who was made the mouthpiece of the Government before the Chambers on all occasions. For the latter office he selected M. Billault, by far the most eminent of the Ministers without portfolios, and a man whose tact, whose temper, whose debating skill, and whose liberal opinions qualified him to fill the first place in a responsible ministry. The dismissal of M. de Persigny, and the selection of M. Billault, were, in fact, accepted as much more important indications of the drift of the Emperor's policy than the decrees of 1860 and 1861. For he had deliberately parted from the faithful supporter whose policy was most distinctly opposed to M. Ollivier's demand; and he had as deliberately selected the Liberal statesman whose appointment was certain to be welcome to M. Ollivier and his friends. By a singular misfortune, M. Billault was struck down by sudden illness on the morrow of his appointment, and the Emperor replaced him—the saying at the time was that they had given M. Billault "un remplaçant plutôt qu'un successeur"—with M. Rouher. No one foresaw at the time the consequences of the appointment. No one foresaw that, in giving the Chamber a new mouthpiece for his Government, the Emperor presented not merely the Chamber but France itself with a master. "It was on the 18th of October, 1863," so writes M. de la Gorce, "that the Emperor made M. Rouher Minister of State. That date should be remembered by the historian. For on that day began the reign of M. Rouher."

Had the Emperor, at this juncture, frankly accepted the full consequences of changes to which he had himself agreed, the history of the next few years might have taken another course. Even if the great disaster of 1870 had not been averted, the responsibility for it might have rested on the Ministers and not on the sovereign. But, in truth, Napoleon's temperament was ill adapted to fit him to work with a constitutional Ministry. Incapable of decision, he could not bring himself to part with the right to decide. He could not, in other words, devolve on others the responsibility of decision. It would, indeed, be possible to argue that he habitually deprived his advisers of the opportunity of giving him advice. Frank to a fault with foreign statesmen, he usually concealed his intentions and his decisions from his own Ministers. Count Walewski enjoyed his confidence in 1858. Yet Count Walewski was not made acquainted with Napoleon's interview with Count Cavour at Plombières in July, nor with the secret treaty between Sardinia and France in December. M. Thouvenel succeeded Count Walewski: yet M. Thouvenel was deceived as to the Emperor's intentions in 1860 towards Rome, and was never fully informed of the Emperor's Mexican policy. M. Drouyn de Lhuys was M. Thouvenel's successor, and he, too, had to complain that he was allowed, in the name of his Government, to declare that the Emperor would never agree to arrangements which he had already accepted. The Emperor, in fact, took a positive pride in his reticence to his own servants. "Do not attach any importance"—so he said to the Prussian Ambassador—"to the words of my Ministers. I alone am acquainted with the foreign policy of France." The Emperor's habitual refusal to entrust his advisers with his intentions was inconvenient enough when he was the autocratic master of France; it became full of danger when he permitted parliamentary criticism and parliamentary interference. For the men who were

charged with the defence of his policy did not know his whole mind: and, though they might not have found it always easy to explain the views of a despot, it was ten times more difficult to interpret the thoughts of a sphinx.

It was, moreover, the Emperor's misfortune that the closing years of his reign were years pregnant with great events in the history of the world, in which France either had, or thought she had, a deep interest. In Europe, Poland was again rising for its independence; Germany was demanding the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question; and Prussia was preparing for the great struggle which was to bring her, in one stride, to Sadowa, and in another to Sedan. If, in Europe, the doctrine of Nationalities, which the Emperor himself had done so much to encourage, was raising issues which could not easily be determined, in North America still more serious problems were being settled by war. For, in the United States, the great Civil War was deciding the issues of slavery and freedom, of union and secession; while in the neighbouring republic of Mexico the struggle between Juarez and Miramon was throwing one of the richest countries in the world into disorder, and involving the foreigners, who had settled in it to make their fortunes, in danger to their persons and in ruin to their estates.

France had always felt a keen interest in the cause of Poland. The majority of Frenchmen would have preferred a war of nationality for the Poles to a war of nationality for the Italians; thoughtful Frenchmen, at any rate, understood that, while a united Italy on their south-eastern frontier might be a possible menace to their own country, a restored Poland, in the east of Europe, could only be a menace to other nations. Into the causes of the Polish insurrection, indeed, Frenchmen did not probably inquire too minutely. We suspect that, even now, they are not likely to accept

M. Ollivier's view of a movement, in which he seems to think that most of the excesses were committed by the Poles, though they may perhaps appreciate from his narrative the difficulties of Napoleon's position. In the first place, the Emperor rightly attached the highest importance to a good understanding with Russia. Without that understanding he would hardly have ventured on undertaking the Italian War of 1859, or on braving this country by the annexation of Savoy and Nice in 1860. It was no slight matter, therefore, to quarrel with Russia by becoming the champion of the Poles. But, in the next place, if the sympathies of his own subjects with the Poles compelled him to interfere, it was not easy to see what he could do. As M. Ollivier puts it, Napoleon could not despatch an army in balloons to a country which could not be approached on any side. It was not merely then—as the Polish proverb ran—that Paris was too far. The real difficulty was that Poland was inaccessible.

In these circumstances the Emperor would have probably acted wisely if he had refrained from doing anything. He committed his first mistake in asking this country to join with him in a remonstrance to Prussia for assenting to a military convention with Russia, under which the soldiers of either country were authorised to follow insurrectionary bands into the territory of the other. The British Ministers were quite as hostile to this convention as the Emperor. Lord Russell—for Lord John had now become a peer—spoke of it in terms of unmeasured severity. But neither he nor his colleagues were prepared to back Napoleon against Prussia. Lord Palmerston believed that the Emperor was bent on seizing the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, and that he was seeking a pretext for a quarrel which would enable him to move an army upon the Rhine. We are disposed

to think that, in this respect, Lord Palmerston did the Emperor an injustice. The more we read, the more we learn of the policy of Napoleon III., the more we feel satisfied that he was ready to incur almost any sacrifice to regain the good understanding with this country which he had lost in 1860, and that he placed the English alliance above the rectification of the Rhine frontier. But we cannot agree with M. Ollivier that Lord Palmerston's suspicions were unnatural. Great rulers should recollect that, in politics as in private life, the broken pitcher may be mended, but that it never can again be trusted to hold water.

Foiled in his first effort, the Emperor had next to consider whether he would accept Lord Russell's proposal that all the Powers should agree to present remonstrances at St. Petersburg. We are not among those who think that this proposal was a wise one. Remonstrances which it is not intended to support by action are not likely to carry much weight. And, as a matter of fact, the notes which were presented by all the Great Powers except Prussia, ultimately resulted in a somewhat discourteous refusal on the part of Russia to continue the discussion. This refusal produced a wild burst of excitement in France. In the Chambers, in society, in the streets, arose a clamour for war. The Emperor, wiser than his subjects, resolutely refused to embark single-handed upon a campaign which the simplest study of geography showed to be full of difficulty. He endeavoured to cover his retreat by his favourite expedient of a congress of sovereigns. But this proposal, which perhaps would in no case have been accepted, was practically destroyed by a despatch of Lord Russell, which M. Ollivier admits that it is difficult to answer; and Lord Russell —so M. Ollivier alleges—made his despatch more unpalatable by communicating a copy of it to the

Times before the original reached the French Foreign Office.

Thus the unhappy insurrection, which led to the final subjugation of Poland, increased the discredit into which the Emperor had already fallen. The man who, in the earlier part of his reign, had marched from victory to victory, seemed in the latter part of his reign to move from failure to failure; and the ruler who in the first period had seemed always ready to use his military strength in a cause in which he believed, appeared in the latter period either incompetent or afraid to support his opinion on the battlefield against a first-rate Power. In the latter part of 1863, indeed, there was good reason why the Emperor should shrink from such a struggle. For, with inconceivable folly, he had allowed himself to become involved in a campaign, 5,000 miles from home, which was exhausting the resources of his country and locking up thousands of men in another hemisphere. The Mexican War, however, had so fatal an effect on the fortunes of the Second Empire, and its incidents are so imperfectly known in England, that it is worth while devoting a few pages to the subject.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Mexico was the scene of civil war. Two men, Juarez and Miramon, were struggling with alternate success for the mastery. In the course of the struggle things were done on both sides which it was difficult to justify. Many Europeans, French and English especially, attracted by the wealth of the country, had settled or were carrying on business in the republic, and these adventurers—Uitlanders they would have been called to-day—were exposed to arbitrary taxation and personal violence. In August, 1860, for example, a considerable quantity of silver, the property of British subjects, was "commandeered" (we again use a more modern word) on its way to the coast, by Juarez's orders. Three

months afterwards a large sum of money was taken from the British Consulate at Mexico itself by a force under Miramon's officers.

Outrages of this character justified grave remonstrance. If remonstrance failed in its effect, precedent could be quoted for a resort to stronger measures. The complaints which this country had against Mexico in 1860 were at least as serious as those which she had preferred against Greece ten years before. It so happened, however, that this country was not alone in its complaints against Mexico. France and Spain were in very much the same position; it was natural, therefore, that the representatives of the three Powers should meet and discuss the possibility of concerted action. They accordingly met in London in the autumn of 1861. They agreed to send a joint expedition to Mexico, and to seize and occupy certain positions on its coast as security for the settlement of their claims and the safety of the Uitlanders.

In the negotiations which thus took place it soon became evident that France was anxious to go much further than England was prepared to follow. France was already contemplating the reversal of Juarez's government, while London was determined to confine itself to obtaining pecuniary redress for the wrongs which British subjects had suffered. The fact was that, in the days of his exile, Napoleon had dreamed a dream of a Latin Empire in the New World, intersected by a canal joining the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific, and that the outbreak of civil war in America had apparently supplied him with an opportunity for giving effect to his dream. He had in Mexico a representative—M. de Saligny—who had penetrated his thoughts and who made it his business to supply him with arguments for his policy. "M. de Saligny became the indefatigable accuser of Juarez. With

premeditated bitterness, he recited all the violence which had been committed in the past, he added all the vexatious experiences which the Uitlanders had recently undergone, and by dexterously grouping his facts he composed a picture, true in its main features, but artificially coloured, to produce an effect." And he repeated, by every mail, the same story; he added, as its moral, the same advice: it is necessary to have in Mexico a force sufficient to protect our interests; the time has come when we must support our remonstrances by force.

The forces which the allied Powers determined to send hardly came up to M. de Saligny's expectations. Spain, indeed, despatched a little army of 6,000 men, under General Prim; France a contingent of 2,500 men, whom it placed under the command of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. This country was content with sending a couple of line-of-battle ships, some frigates, and on landing some 700 marines. The allied forces, however, on their arrival at Vera Cruz, in January, 1862, disclaimed all thoughts of war. They had come with the intention of securing redress, but with the best wishes for the happiness of Mexico. They proceeded to formulate their demands. The English claimed the punctual execution of treaties and the prompt payment of all debts. The Spaniards made a somewhat similar demand. The French demanded a lump sum of 12,000,000 piastres (about £1,500,000), and "the loyal and immediate" execution of the Jecker contract.

In 1856 Miramon, in sore want of money, had contracted a loan with M. Jecker—a Swiss banker—for the nominal amount of £3,000,000. M. de la Gorce states that M. de Morny, the half-brother of Napoleon and the President of the French Chamber, had a corrupt interest in the loan. M. Ollivier, whose friendship for M. de Morny is apparent in many passages of his book, says that he is not in a

position either to affirm or to deny the truth of the story; but that he can give a formal assurance that the Emperor never gave a minute's consideration to the Jecker loan. However that may be, it is certain that M. de Saligny included in the French demands the loyal and immediate execution of the Jecker contract; and that the British and Spanish representatives protested against the claim, and declared that it was "shameful."

It was one thing to formulate demands of this character; it was another to enforce them. It is true that the allied troops were at Vera Cruz. But their presence did not enable them to procure any money, and the men were already beginning to melt away with fever. It was, in fact, becoming plain either that the troops must be moved to some higher and healthier part of the country, or that the expedition must be abandoned. The allied forces, however, were not strong enough to venture into the interior; they found themselves, in consequence, forced to negotiate with Juarez, and they concluded the Convention of La Solidad. Under this treaty Juarez gained the great advantage of recognition by the allies; he was even permitted to fly his flag at Vera Cruz. In return, the French were allowed to establish themselves at Tehuacan; the Spaniards at Orizaba and Cordova. The commandant of the British contingent preferred to embark his men on board his vessels, and keep them, under healthier conditions, at sea.

Before the news of this convention reached Europe, the Emperor, a little jealous of the numerical superiority of the Spanish force, decided on reinforcing his own troops; and, early in 1862, he despatched General Lorencez with 4,000 additional men to Mexico. With this new force came General Almonte, the natural son of Morelos, the hero of the Mexican War of Independence —a man who had been selected by Miramon to represent

him at Paris, and who had persuaded the Emperor that there would be no difficulty in overthrowing Juarez's government and establishing monarchical institutions in its place. General Almonte's presence accentuated the difficulties of the situation. He came with the object of overthrowing Juarez's government; and he found that the allies had just made a solemn treaty with that government under which French troops were moving into healthier quarters at Tehuacan, and Juarez's own flag was flying at Vera Cruz. He found, too, that every suggestion which he made for interference in the internal affairs of the country increased the tension between the commanders of the allies. The differences between the allies became so acute that the British, who, in pursuance of their instructions, were rigidly refusing to intervene in the internal politics of Mexico, resolved to withdraw from the expedition. The Spaniards, with some hesitation, followed their example. The French were thus left alone to carry out the ambitious projects of their Emperor, which were slowly becoming manifest.

It is satisfactory to note that, in recording these proceedings, French historians are agreed in according praise to both the policy and the conduct of the British Government. Neither M. de la Gorce nor M. Ollivier has any special liking for Lord Russell, who in 1862 held the seals of the British Foreign Office. But M. de la Gorce calls his criticism of the French policy singularly wise; and M. Ollivier defends M. Thouvenel from any charge of dishonesty by affirming that in his heart he thought with Lord Russell.[1] We may assume, therefore, that the only criticism which French historians have to offer on our withdrawal from the expedition is an expression of their regret that their own Government did not follow

[1] "Au fond, l'honnête Thouvenel pensait comme Russell" (vol. iv. p. 381).

our example. The French, in fact, were surrounded with difficulty. The treaty of La Solidad had apparently made an attack on Juarez impossible; and General Almonte could not carry out his own views, or perhaps even Napoleon's instructions, without destroying Juarez's power. The French, accordingly, under General Almonte's inspiration, set themselves, as a first step, to tear up the convention to which they had just agreed, and they charged Juarez, in a document—which M. Ollivier says he blushes to copy—with a breach of its stipulations. A miserable and unworthy excuse—which the French troops themselves are said to have resented—was made the basis of an unworthy and unjustifiable war.

Success in military matters is occasionally held to justify the unjustifiable. If the French, however, had entered on a war without excuse, they commenced it in a state of ignorance which is almost inconceivable. General Lorencez declared at the outset of the campaign that the French were so superior in race, in organisation, in discipline, and in other qualities, that at the head of 6,000 men he was master of Mexico. Within a month this *soi-disant* master of Mexico had been foiled in an attack on Puebla—an open town—and forced to retire with a loss of 500 men.

News of this disaster reached Paris in June, 1862, and the Emperor, to do him justice, at once roused himself to the necessities of the situation. He hurried off reinforcements to Mexico; he raised the grand total of the French troops to 27,000, and ultimately to 34,000 men; and he selected General Forey, who had served under his orders in Italy, for the supreme command. General Forey arrived in Mexico in August, 1862, but he did not find himself in a position to open the campaign till February, 1863. Puebla, the scene of General Lorencez's defeat, was only taken after a two months'

siege, at the end of March. Mexico, the capital of the country, was occupied in June. Juarez hastily retired into the more inaccessible portions of the republic. A provisional government was instituted, which took for its title "The Regency of the Empire," and the French persuaded themselves that Mexico had reached the limit of its trouble, and that they themselves had come to the end of the war. General Forey, made a marshal, was recalled, and the command was entrusted to his chief lieutenant, General Bazaine.

The conviction that the war was at an end, that Mexico (to use General Bazaine's phrase) was "conquis, pacifié," induced the Archduke Maximilian to accept the crown, which the Emperor had from the first contemplated he should receive. But the war was not at an end. Juarez, though he had abandoned his capital, still maintained his authority in the more inaccessible portions of the territory. He called on his fellow-countrymen to unite in a great effort to save their independence. The country, at his orders, was covered with bands of guerillas, who intercepted the convoys and cut the communications of the French. In such a struggle the Mexicans had many advantages. True, their men were badly trained, badly clothed, badly fed, badly armed, and, in many cases, forcibly taken from their homes against their will; but they were brave, temperate, tired by no exertion, and, mounted on lean but wiry ponies, they had a mobility which the French did not possess. The very women aided their cause. They followed their husbands to the field, watched over the transport and commissariat, and, when a halt was ordered, prepared the food.

Thus, if General Forey in the summer of 1863 had returned to France with the conviction that he had, in the language of his successor, conquered and pacified the country, that successor, General Bazaine, soon found that

he was in the presence of a guerilla war which was much more trying than the regular warfare with which General Forey had dealt. It is only fair to add that he carried out the work with energy and skill. Towards the end of 1863, or nearly two years after the commencement of the war, three-fourths of the territory and four-fifths of the population were acquired for the Empire. In the beginning of 1864, two years after the first expedition had sailed, only some detached commandos—as we should call them to-day—kept up the semblance of organised resistance. "Every day it was announced that they were scattered to the winds, and every morrow saw them reappear as numerous as ever."

The more cheering reports which continued to arrive in Europe encouraged the Archduke Maximilian to embark on his fatal expedition. And in June, 1864, the unhappy Prince, and his still more unhappy wife, landed at Vera Cruz. He may, perhaps, be forgiven for inferring from what he saw that General Bazaine's boast that the country was "conquis, pacifié" was justified. The resistance which the French were still encountering seemed gradually weakening and measures were in progress to ensure its more rapid collapse. General Bazaine was organising a great movement—it would be called to-day a great "drive"—by which he hoped to clear the whole of Northern Mexico from the Juaristes, and to drive Juarez himself across the frontier. His complete success induced him to repeat the same operation in Southern Mexico, where he gained a similar advantage. The beginning of 1865 was the most prosperous period in the French occupation, and the culminating point in Marshal Bazaine's career. Fortune had apparently smiled on the Commander-in-Chief. He might almost have been compared to Alexander in Dryden's famous poem. He had even "the lovely Thaïs" at his side in the person of a Mexican lady, whom he had married in

Mexico. Yet he was already involved in difficulties which were ultimately to lead to the withdrawal of the French, and to the defeat, the capture, and the execution of Maximilian.

These difficulties arose from two causes. In the first place, even the Emperor Napoleon—dreamer as he was—would have never embarked on the Mexican campaign if the existence of civil war in the United States had not made it certain that he had no reason for fearing American intervention. During the three years of warfare the Americans had stood sullenly aloof, powerless to take any steps in opposition to a policy diametrically opposed to the Monroe Doctrine. In the spring of 1865, however, when the Mexican War was entering on its fourth year, the resistance of the Southern States collapsed. Large bodies of armed men, disbanded in the States, were only too ready to embark on some fresh enterprise, and Juarez's partisans had no more difficulty in securing recruits in Texas than the Fenians at the same time encountered in raising recruits for an attempt on Ireland. The Juaristes enjoyed, however, an advantage which the Fenians did not share. Texas "marched" upon Mexico; bands of guerillas could easily cross the frontier; and the Government of the United States declared that it would require all the cavalry of Europe and America to prevent their doing so. But the action of the United States was not confined to a passive toleration of armed incursions from their own country. Freed from the pressure of civil war, they rejected with disdain a proposal of the French Government that they should recognise Maximilian; they emphasised their refusal by accrediting a diplomatic agent to Juarez himself.

In France, moreover, the expedition was becoming more and more unpopular. The Government commanded a great majority in the French Chamber; the small minority

did not dare to display its hostility. But it found ample opportunity for criticism in the constant applications which were made to it for supplies: How comes it—so men began to ask—that in this country which we are told is at peace we continue to fight battles? It is pleasant enough to learn that the forces of our enemy are scattered; it would be much more pleasant to know that they would not re-form. The Juaristes, said another, are like the brigands of Naples, who, we are assured once a week, have been entirely destroyed. M. Forcade, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, spoke out even more strongly. "How long," he asked, "are we to persevere in this gigantic folly?"

But, in truth, it did not require the arguments of the Opposition to influence the Emperor. In 1865 he had only one object—to withdraw, if possible with honour, from an expedition which he should never have undertaken; and, in the beginning of 1866, he announced to his Legislature that he was accordingly arranging for the withdrawal of the French troops. This decision destroyed the sole hope which Maximilian still retained of preserving his already tottering throne; yet, hard as it was on Maximilian, it was inevitable. Many months, in fact, were not to pass before the Emperor was to find himself face to face with fresh proof that it had already been too long delayed.

For if, in the six years which had passed since the Emperor had risen to the zenith of his power at Villafranca, the star of his destiny had been steadily declining, its lustre was to be almost extinguished by the events of the critical year which was just beginning. For Count von Bismarck was preparing his spring upon Austria, and the struggle between the Man of Iron at Berlin and the weary and irresolute sovereign at Paris was commencing, which was only to terminate, more than four years afterwards, at Sedan.

Before venturing to attack Austria, Count von Bismarck thought it wise to address himself to the French Emperor; and thus it happened that Sadowa was preceded by an interview at Biarritz, just as Solferino had its origin in the meeting at Plombières. There is little doubt that the Emperor opened the interview by an expression of his strong desire to complete his programme of 1859 by giving Venice to Italy; and that Count von Bismarck saw that he could practically obtain a free hand in Germany if he gave a promise that this transfer should be effected. "Si l'Italie n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer," was the famous phrase in which he expressed his sense of the advantage which the Emperor's predilections for Italy were giving him. But he did not rely on the Emperor's wishes respecting Italy alone. He dexterously held out the hope that Prussia would consent to a rectification of the French frontier on the Rhine. It is certain, however, that the Emperor took no steps to embody this arrangement or this promise in writing, or even to obtain Count von Bismarck's assent to it in a form which could not be subsequently repudiated. He gave the Count all he asked, and exacted nothing but the vaguest of assurances in return for his concession.

This loose method of transacting business was no new thing with the French Emperor. At Plombières, six years before, he had left it uncertain whether France was to receive from Piedmont, as the price of French assistance, Savoy and Nice, or Savoy alone. His success on the first occasion may have satisfied him that he could safely follow the same precedent. But he also made the great mistake of miscalculating the strength of the two combatants in the approaching duel. He was deceived, not only by the reports of his own officers, but by his own experience of the Austrian army, into believing that, even with the aid of Italy, the task of Prussia would tax her utmost resources; and that the war which she was provoking would inevitably

be long. The Emperor, in other words, thought that he was sanctioning a war which would last certainly for months, and possibly for years; and in which, after both combatants were exhausted, he might intervene with decisive effect, and obtain all that he required. The victory of Sadowa rudely dispelled the illusion, and in a council, which was held at Paris, M. Drouyn de Lhuys urged the Emperor to summon the Chambers, to demand supplies, to "impose" the intervention of France, and to move an army on the Rhine. M. de la Valette, who a few months afterwards succeeded M. Drouyn de Lhuys as Foreign Minister, resisted this counsel, and, in resisting it, he showed that France was not in a position to adopt the energetic policy which M. Drouyn de Lhuys was recommending. Mexico had consumed everything, and France, though nominally disposing of many legions, could not place a fully equipped army of 50,000 men on the Rhine. Verily, if M. de la Gorce is right in saying that "the fate of the Second Empire was sealed in Italy," its grave was dug in Mexico.[1]

After Sadowa war between France and Prussia became, sooner or later, inevitable. The French could not permanently endure the consolidation of a first-rate military Power on their Rhenish frontier; the Germans could not patiently tolerate the heavy burden of a period of prolonged preparation for the struggle. It required, therefore, no perspicacity to foresee that war would, in all probability, occur; and the chances were, if war ensued, that it would not be long delayed. For it was the obvious intent of Prussia that, if war were to come, the decisive blow should

[1] M. Ollivier denies that the Empire was exhausted by the Mexican campaign. He contends that the consumption of men, guns, and money in Mexico was too small to make any difference. But he apparently forgets that the effect of the Mexican campaign was to divert the supplies intended for the army at home, and to prevent the Emperor from applying for further supplies for its reorganisation.

be struck so soon as the various German armies, which had been placed, by treaty in 1867, at the disposal of Prussia, were organised on the Prussian model. Napoleon had, or ought to have had, these facts before him. Though he was as ignorant as our own statesmen of the organisation and strength of the German armies, though he was partially blind to the disorganisation and defects of his own forces, he must have known that the struggle, if it took place, would be severe, and that it was necessary to take decisive measures to provide for it. The light which General Lebrun throws both on what the Emperor did and what he failed to do, at this time, with this object, imparts peculiar interest to his "Souvenirs Militaires."

It seems clear, from General Lebrun's account, that, in 1866, the French army was defective both in men and material. Nominally consisting of 600,000 men, the Crimea and Italy had both proved that it could not spare more than 150,000 troops for a foreign expedition. In 1866, moreover, it had been further enfeebled by losses in Mexico, and by M. Fould's unseasonable retrenchments. Aware of these facts, immediately after the Prusso-Austrian War, the Emperor appointed a commission to consider whether the army should be permanently increased. The military members of the commission were strongly of opinion that large additions should at once be made to it. The Ministers who served on it, however, declared that their political position would be untenable if they were compelled to ask for more men and more money from the Legislature. The Emperor, hesitating between these conflicting opinions, endeavoured to compromise the matter by supplementing the regular army with a Garde Mobile, to be employed only in France, and to defend the frontiers and garrison the fortresses in time of war. But even this expedient was not carried out; the Ministers objected to ask the Legislature for the necessary funds:

and the army—while the nation was drifting towards war—was suffered to remain weak.

Arms, moreover, were as defective as men. The French artillery was markedly inferior to the artillery of other nations. French officers, specially selected to inquire into the matter, were amazed and alarmed at the superior practice of Belgian cannon. The French rifle was still more plainly inferior to the Prussian needle gun, whose power had been incontestably proved both in Denmark and at Sadowa. The Emperor's military advisers had, at any rate, done their best to procure a substantial addition to the number of men; but they resisted any improvements in the arms. The needle gun, they declared, would lead to an inconceivable waste of ammunition; superior artillery could be defeated by new tactics; and the French army—whatever its equipment—would always be ready to sustain the honour and the cause of France. The men at the head of the French army—as General Lebrun bitterly complains—closed their eyes to the light, and slumbered in an optimism from which nothing could arouse them.

One expedient, however, was still possible. If France could not be persuaded to raise either the quantity or the quality of her armaments, she might, at least, obtain additional strength from alliances with other nations. At the beginning of 1870, the Archduke Albert, an officer of distinction and the uncle of the Emperor of Austria, was sent to France: nominally to study the organisation of the French army, but, in reality, to propose a strict alliance between France, Austria, and Italy. The Emperor was so much impressed with the proposal that he consented to send an officer to Vienna, to concert a plan of campaign against Prussia with the Archduke; and in May, 1870, General Lebrun, who was entrusted with the mission, discussed with the Archduke an elaborate scheme for the

invasion of Prussia by the three Powers, presumably in the spring of 1871. The Archduke based his whole plan on the assumption that France could mobilise her forces so quickly that she could throw a formidable army across the frontier on the fifteenth day after the declaration of war; and that Prussia would take, on the contrary, seven weeks to concentrate her armies. On this hypothesis, he assumed that the French could reach Nuremberg in force before the Prussians were ready to move. The Emperor of Austria, who subsequently had an interview with Lebrun, assured him that if the French, in occupation of Southern Germany, were to proclaim themselves the liberators of German territory, public opinion in Austria would justify him in joining in the war; and the French and Austrian armies might then join hands in Saxony. Some tidings of this scheme, which was laid before Napoleon in the closing days of June, probably reached Count Bismarck's ears, and induced him to make a new move. If war were to come he was determined that it should come at a time of his own choosing, and he accordingly met the projected alliance between France and Austria by encouraging the Hohenzollern candidature for the crown of Spain. France, as he probably foresaw, insisted on the withdrawal of the candidate. But France—as he could hardly have foreseen—was not satisfied with the withdrawal. Though the projected alliance suggested or necessitated a policy of waiting, she had the folly to demand a guarantee for the future which Prussia could not give. Whether the French Ministers were deceived on the state of their armaments; whether they were alarmed at visible symptoms of discontent in the army, and thought war essential to secure the permanence of the dynasty—with light hearts and with inadequate preparations they plunged into the struggle which involved the downfall of the Empire and the prostration of their country. The event proved at once the

worthlessness of the Archduke's calculations. Under their irresolute Emperor, the mobilisation of the French forces was protracted over weeks. Under their resolute Minister, the mobilisation of the German armies was accomplished in days. The projected invasion of Germany was turned into an invasion of France; and Austria was deprived of the opportunity which, in the opinion of her Emperor, would alone have afforded any justification for interference.

We have endeavoured, in what we have written, to select the passages in the Emperor's career which illustrate at once the story of his rise and of his fall and his capacity or incapacity for government. We have endeavoured to follow the central thread of the narrative. Greatly as we disapprove of the Emperor's policy, we have tried to do justice to the better points of his character. We are far from regarding him as a bad man. We believe that he honestly desired to do his duty in the great position to which he had risen, and that, frequently as he drifted into plot and crime, his instincts—if he had only possessed the strength to follow them—would have usually guided him into a better course. We cannot, moreover, be wholly insensible either to his relations with this country or to the unparalleled catastrophe of his fall. We feel something like gratitude for the one; we are moved to pity by the other. The spectacle of the Emperor at Sedan, indeed, softens our criticism. In compassion for the physical and mental sufferings of the man we almost forget to blame the faults of the ruler.

Yet we must not forget that, from first to last, the story of the Empire is a story of crime, and that the story of the Emperor is the story of a conspirator. Through plot and counterplot he made his way to the throne; through plot and counterplot he moved to the Italian War, which was the commencement of his downfall; through plot and

counterplot he drifted into the final struggle which ended at Sedan. His idea of statesmanship was intrigue; like the mole, he burrowed underground. Like the mole, his course was so tortuous, and so concealed, that those who were nearest to him were frequently unable to see whither he was trending.

The tortuous nature of his policy was partly due to his fatal irresolution, his chief disqualification for rule. He drifted from point to point on the flood and ebb of decision and indecision; and, while he hesitated, the helm, at the chief crises of his career, was seized by bolder men. In the earlier years of his power the policy of the sovereign—if M. de Persigny may be believed—was moulded by M. de Persigny. In the middle of his career the Emperor's hands were forced by the resolute policy of Cavour and the atrocious crime of Orsini. At the close of it, while the Emperor was intriguing with Austria or commanding and countermanding the mobilisation of his own troops, Prince Bismarck assumed control of the situation; and the Emperor was as powerless to withstand the great Prussian Chancellor as, eleven years before, he had proved powerless to resist the policy of the great Italian Minister.

Irresolution is a defect in any ruler; but it is disastrous when the ruler is a man with ambitions to satisfy and ideas to fulfil. That the Emperor was ambitious, every one will acknowledge. The nephew—as M. de la Gorce puts it—had inherited not merely the name but the ambitions of the uncle. That he was an idealist will be equally admitted. During his years of patient waiting, he clung to the idea or the dream of a second Empire; during his years of successful and unsuccessful rule he equally clung to the idea that France, under his rule, should follow the example of the ancient world; and that, as the first Napoleon had achieved, like Julius Cæsar, political and military success

so the third Napoleon should revive the polish and magnificence of the Augustan age.

At one moment of his career the idea was almost realised. The first Exhibition in France showed the people of neighbouring nations how much had been done to increase its wealth and beautify its capital. Amidst all the anxieties of a great war, the Emperor—so it seemed—had neglected nothing that could multiply the resources and add to the dignity of his Empire. Luxury, wealth, beauty, wit were concentrated in his Court; and the visitor at Paris might almost have repeated the words of the Queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

If, as we have said, the story of the Empire is the story of a crime, it is the story also of a misfortune. Amidst the many changes through which France has passed since the Revolution she has experienced nothing so disastrous as the Second Empire. It cost her huge sacrifices both of men and money, and it did not afford her even the scanty consolation of success. But it is, perhaps, possible that the Empire inflicted even worse evils on France than the defeat of her armies and the dismemberment of her territory. It crushed out all that was best and purest in French politics; it substituted, for what it destroyed, a policy of corruption. Perhaps, however, the Second Empire accomplished one good thing. It made—let us hope—a return to Imperial institutions impossible.

THE SEVENTH EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

THE lives of great men are being constantly written in increasing numbers. Any one who achieves distinction in war, in politics, in art, or in letters, seems certain, in this age of writing, to obtain a biographer. The biographies, indeed, which win most popularity are those of self-made persons. The public derives both pleasure and advantage from learning how men of resolution and genius have raised themselves from small beginnings, have surmounted apparently insuperable obstacles, and have attained, after a life of successful toil, position, power, wealth, rank, and honour. Just as the French soldier is stimulated by the reflection that he carries a possible marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack, so the English lad perceives from the examples of Lord Eldon and Lord Campbell that the woolsack may be won by the humblest of his fellow countrymen ; and that no career is impossible in a country which produced, in one century, a Turner, a Stephenson, a Cobden, a Tenterden, and a host of other self-made heroes.

Yet, if the imagination is impressed by the stories of men who have risen, the reader should not lightly pass by the lives of those other men who have refused to rise. Men there have been, men there are, whose whole life has been a noble self-sacrifice to duty ; who, intent on carrying out the work readiest to their hands, have never turned aside to

catch the passing breeze of fortune which might have wafted them to distinction; who, devoting their abilities to the service of their fellowmen, have neglected the opportunities which might have led them to office and to fame. It is no exaggerated flattery to say that one of the brightest and best examples of this class of workers is the peer who is the subject of this essay.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, was born in Grosvenor Square on April 28, 1801. His father, of whom we shall have more to say, was for many years chairman of committees in the House of Lords. His mother was a daughter of the fourth Duke of Marlborough. The ancestors of the Earl both on his mother's and his father's side had been distinguished men. The first Earl of Shaftesbury had been the famous Minister of Charles II.; the third Earl had been the equally famous author of the "Characteristics;" the second, fourth, and fifth Earls achieved no distinction or left no mark on the history of their times.

Lord Shaftesbury's father, the sixth Earl, appears to have made an excellent chairman of committees, and "on questions of parliamentary law and usage his authority was unquestioned." But, in the forty years during which he discharged this duty, he acquired dictatorial habits which, if they facilitated the business of the House of Lords, did not add to the charm of private intercourse. Throughout his life he had no sympathy with his son, and he was frequently estranged from him. If, too, the father were immersed in politics, Lord Shaftesbury's mother was occupied with the claims of fashion and pleasure. Both parents ruled by fear and not by love; their early harshness left permanent traces on the recollection; and, throughout his life, Lord Shaftesbury never seems to have either consulted or considered his father and his mother.

A child, however, is like ivy; it requires the support of some nature stronger than its own. Lord Shaftesbury found the help he needed in an old servant, once his mother's maid and then her housekeeper, "a simple-hearted, loving Christian woman," who took the boy on her knees, told him Bible stories, and taught him to pray. Lord Shaftesbury was fond of saying that this good old woman was the best friend he ever had in the world. But the friends were soon parted by death, and Lord Shaftesbury was again virtually alone. Unfortunately, too, the boy was deprived of this counsel and help at a time when he was in need of comfort. For, from 1808 to 1813, he was sent to a private school at Chiswick; and of this establishment he said, in his old age, "I think there never was such a wicked school before or since. The place was bad, wicked, filthy; and the treatment was starvation and cruelty;" or, to quote another passage, "It was very similar to Dotheboys Hall." Lord Shaftesbury was singularly sensitive. When his feelings were affected, he frequently used exaggerated language; and we have very little doubt that this school, which he regarded as a "hot-bed of every kind of evil," was not much worse than the ordinary private school of the first decade of the nineteenth century. It was kept by Dr. Thomas Horne, who, it is admitted, was "a good classical scholar capable of imparting to his pupils plenty of Latin and Greek." But Lord Shaftesbury's biographer omits to tell us that Dr. Horne was the father of Sir William Horne, Attorney-General under Lord Grey, and afterwards Master in Chancery; that the school was both successful and fashionable; that no less a person than Lord Lyndhurst was educated in it; and that the letter, which Lord Lyndhurst wrote from it as a boy, which will be found in Mrs. Amory's life of the Copleys, or, copied from her pages, in Sir T. Martin's biography, creates a very different impression of the

establishment from that which we derive from Lord Shaftesbury's opinion of it.

In fact, there is strong internal evidence to show that the school was not so repulsive as Lord Shaftesbury himself believed. For Mr. Hodder tells us that "the fear with which Ashley regarded his schoolmaster and the bullies of the school was less than the fear with which he regarded his parents." And again: "The severity of home was bearable, inasmuch as it was of short duration, and the return to school was hailed with delight as a welcome relief." A school must surely have had some merits which was preferable to home. Whether this be so or not, however, two changes made a marked difference in the boy's comfort. In 1811 the father, succeeding to the title, went to live at St. Giles, the family seat in Dorsetshire; and in 1813 the son was sent to Harrow. "Harrow and its beautiful surroundings" did "much to dissipate the gloom which had gathered over his childhood, and St. Giles helped to finish what Harrow had begun. His mind was braced up and invigorated; new hopes and aspirations were kindled, old perturbations of spirit were allayed, and the prospects of life looked brighter than they had ever done before as he viewed them under the influence of these country scenes."

Lord Shaftesbury was of opinion that he learned very little at Harrow; he was idle and fond of amusements. As, however, he left school soon after attaining fifteen years of age, and as he had obtained some prizes and had reached the sixth form, we think it probable that he was, like many eminent men, a severe critic of his own youth. After leaving Harrow he went to reside for two years with a clergyman in Derby, "and," he tells us, "perhaps no two years were ever so misspent." In 1819 his father decided on sending him to Christ Church. "Dr. Short, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, was appointed to be my tutor. . . .

I remember well his first question, 'Do you intend to take a degree?' I answered at once, 'I cannot say, but I will try.'" His biographer adds, "He did try," and the result was that in 1822 he took a first-class in classics. Lord Shaftesbury modestly said himself, "I have had a great many surprises in my life, but I do not think that I was ever more surprised than when I took honours at Oxford." We have ourselves a high respect for Lord Shaftesbury's ability and industry. But, while we recognise them to the full, we contend that his degree affords a tolerably good proof that his time both at Harrow and Derby had been more usefully employed than his self-depreciation would have otherwise allowed us to imagine.

The eldest son of an earl, who had taken first-class honours at Oxford, would probably in these days be brought into Parliament. In the days of an unreformed Parliament his introduction to the House of Commons was almost a matter of course. Accordingly, at the general election of 1826, Lord Ashley was returned for his grandfather's—the Duke of Marlborough's—pocket borough of Woodstock; and in January, 1828, after having previously refused office when offered to him by Mr. Canning, he accepted a seat at the Board of Control from the Duke of Wellington. This situation—almost the only office of profit he ever held—he retained till the fall of the Tories in 1830.

There are various passages in Lord Shaftesbury's diary which prove that, at this period of his career, he was at once animated by strong ambition and disappointed at his own failure. He wrote on his twenty-fifth birthday in his diary: "I am twenty-five years old—a great age for one who is neither wise, nor good, nor useful, nor endowed with capability of becoming so. . . . No man had ever more ambition"; and again: "Visions without end, but, God be praised, all of a noble character"; and

exactly a year afterwards: "My birthday again. . . . It has been a year of study and exertion, but I have neither learnt nor done anything. . . . And yet I cannot keep down an inspiring sentiment which, God knows, aims at all virtue, and through that at all greatness." One difficulty, indeed, seemed to interfere with his success in Parliament. He had not the readiness which is essential in debate; and, perhaps conscious of his own deficiencies, he did not venture to break silence in the House of Commons till he had been nearly two years in Parliament. Even then he spoke "in so low a tone that he was nearly inaudible in the gallery"; and in his own judgment, though he did not disgrace himself, "the exhibition was far from glorious." Twelve years afterwards, when he had become a man of mark, he summed up his own defects as a debater in this way: "My memory is deficient, my knowledge scanty; I have no readiness for impromptu speaking; all must be prepared, and the greater part even to the language."

It was perhaps a consciousness of his defects as a speaker that induced him, at this time of his life, to devote his attention to other than parliamentary pursuits. In 1827 we find him studying Welsh; and in 1829, "after completing his study of Welsh," he "turned his attention to Hebrew." In 1828 he earnestly desired to devote himself exclusively to scientific pursuits. For a month he spent all his leisure on the study of astronomy. In fact, in these earlier years of his life, he was like a vessel drifting with the tide, showing no outward signs of the course which he was ultimately to take, and of the work which it was his destiny to accomplish.

He was, however, about to take one decisive step, which had the best influence on his career. From the very first he had evidently disliked a single life. His mind was at once too serious and too religious for the amusements and

occupations which unhappily absorb the leisure of many young men of position. So early as in 1826, during a short continental tour, he fell desperately in love. "Man," he wrote, "never has loved more furiously or more imprudently. The object was, and is, an angel; but she was surrounded by, and would have brought with her, a halo of hell." We are not permitted to know more of this perfect being, whose future was destroyed by her disagreeable surroundings; for Lord Ashley, with a courage which few men of his age would have displayed, subdued his feelings and returned home. Perhaps, however, the recollection of his charmer still lingered on his memory, for nearly four years passed before in solitude he began again "to feel how truly God pronounced, 'It is not good for man to be alone.'" But he still hesitated. "I dread the chance of a Jezebel or a Cleopatra, or that insupportable compound of folly and worldliness which experience displays every day, but history has not yet recorded. Give me the mother of the Gracchi, exalted by the Gospel." It is not, however, given to every age to produce a Cornelia; and Lord Ashley obtained something which was better suited to him. In June, 1830, he married Lady Emily Cowper, who, in his own language, was "a wife as good, as true, and as deeply beloved, as God ever gave to man." It is interesting to add that, according to Lord Granville, Lord Ashley at this time was "a singularly good-looking man, with absolutely nothing of effeminate beauty." Perhaps, however, we get a still better idea of him from his own phrase, "They call me and William (his brother) the Sublime and Beautiful."

Other changes had, in the meanwhile, affected Lord Ashley. At the general election of 1830 he was elected to represent Dorchester. At the dissolution in the following year he contested and won Dorsetshire. He was, however, a poor man, and he frankly told his friends

that, though he was ready to fight their battle, he could not bear the cost of the contest. The battle was fought, the expense of it exceeded £15,000, and the fund raised for defraying it proved altogether inadequate. "The burden of payment fell upon Lord Ashley, and he became involved in harassing and distressing difficulties." To add to his embarrassments, his opponent threatened to petition against his return; and Lord Ashley, with characteristic despondency, declined to throw good money after bad, and threatened to retire. The Tory party, however, if it had not fulfilled all its promises, stoutly defended the seat which Lord Ashley had won. His election was confirmed, and for the next fifteen years he continued to represent the county in Parliament.

It was a circumstance of no slight importance, both to Lord Ashley and his country, that he was thus enabled to preserve his seat in the House of Commons. For the opportunity was at last arriving, which perhaps presents itself to us all, and the man was thus secured who was ready to avail himself of it.

Perhaps few people, who have not made the subject a special study, have any acquaintance with the deep misery of the English poor which commenced after the Peace of Paris, which increased after the Reform Act, and which attained its maximum during the first years of the reign of our late Queen. Yet it may be traced clearly enough in the statistics of blue-books, and in the pages of fiction, of poetry, and of other literature. If, too, the condition of the poor generally was miserable, the state of the women and children who worked in mines and factories was degraded. In 1802, indeed, the first Sir Robert Peel succeeded in carrying an Act for the care and education of the poor children who were apprenticed to manufacturers. The Act had the effect of gradually doing away with some of the worst features of the apprentice

system. But the manufacturers succeeded in replacing the apprentices, who were generally drawn from a distance, with children living in the neighbourhood of their mills. Thus legislation so far had only relieved one set of children at the expense of another set. Struck by this circumstance, Sir Robert in 1819 obtained the assent of Parliament to another measure which forbade the employment in a cotton factory of any child under nine years of age, or any young person under sixteen, for more than twelve hours a day. This Bill, however, only applied to cotton factories; in all other industries infant labour was unregulated. Children of the tenderest age were commonly worked for fifteen hours a day with brief intervals for rest and food. Large numbers of them actually perished, worn out by toil, before they attained their full age; stunted and deformed, the survivors bore on their persons indelible marks of the cruel severity of their labour.

"In 1825 Sir John Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton) passed a Bill by which it became unlawful to employ any child in a cotton factory who should be under eighteen years of age for more than sixty-nine hours a week;" and in 1831, with the assistance of Lord Morpeth, he endeavoured to extend the provisions of the law to other textile industries. "The opposition to the measure," however, was very strong; the millowners succeeded in restricting it to cotton mills; and, even in the case of these mills, the measure of 1831 did not materially improve the condition of the operatives.

In the same year in which this measure was thus mutilated, Mr. Michael Thomas Sadler "introduced his famous Ten Hours Bill into the House of Commons." Modern history is so little known that perhaps few people in the present day recollect the debt which factory operatives owe to this remarkable man. Brought originally into

Parliament by the Duke of Newcastle to resist the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, Mr. Sadler, during his short parliamentary career, was a Tory among Tories. In the political contests of the time he was the eloquent and uncompromising opponent of political and religious freedom. But in social matters his humane and earnest temperament made him the warm advocate of the working classes ; and it should always be recollected to his honour that he proposed the Ten Hours Bill fifteen years before the Legislature adopted its provisions. Originating the measure in 1831, he introduced it in 1832, and he succeeded in compelling the House of Commons to refer the question to a Select Committee. Unfortunately for his reputation, his conduct of the matter terminated at this point, for he failed to secure a seat in the Reformed Parliament. In his absence the delegates of the operatives resolved on inviting Lord Ashley to take charge of the Bill. Lord Ashley at that time had paid so little attention to the subject that a few weeks before he was actually ignorant that an inquiry into it had been instituted by the House of Commons. "I have only zeal and good intentions to bring to this work," so he said himself. "I can have no merit in it; that must all belong to Mr. Sadler. It seems no one else will undertake it, so I will ; and, without cant or hypocrisy, which I hate, I assure you I dare not refuse the request you have so earnestly pressed. I believe it is my duty to God and to the poor, and I trust He will support me."

Animated by these views, Lord Ashley, immediately after the meeting of the first Reformed Parliament, introduced the measure into the House of Commons. The manufacturers, alarmed at the possible consequences of its provisions, urged the necessity for further inquiry, and, by a narrow majority of only one vote, carried an address to the Crown for a Royal Commission. The Commissioners,

however, instead of supporting the fears of the employers, confirmed the conclusions which had already been expressed by Mr. Sadler's Select Committee. They reported that children employed in factories worked the same number of hours as adults ; that the protracted toil permanently deteriorated their strength ; that, at the age at which they were engaged, they were not free agents ; and that a case was consequently made out for the interference of the Legislature. But, though the report was thus in favour of legislation, the Commissioners were hardly prepared for the effective remedies which were proposed by Lord Ashley ; and Lord Althorp, on behalf of the Grey Ministry, accordingly undertook to remodel the measure. His views naturally prevailed, and Lord Ashley, who was pledged to reject all compromise, threw up the further conduct of the Bill. Lord Althorp, taking the matter into his own hands, then succeeded in carrying a measure which forbade the employment of children under nine, and which limited the labour of children under thirteen to nine hours a day and forty-eight hours a week, but which imposed no new limitation on the toil of older children.

Lord Ashley long afterwards admitted that this measure, in its amended shape, contained "some humane and highly useful provisions." Whatever shortcomings it may have had, it set the question at rest for another five years. Men, however, like Mr. Oastler, throughout this period, condemned the Act as fraudulent and inoperative ; and in 1838 Lord Ashley, strengthened by a new agitation, introduced a new Factories Regulation Bill. Before introducing the measure, he took a course eminently characteristic of the determination by which he was constantly actuated to see and judge in all cases for himself. He went down to Bradford.

"I asked for a collection of cripples and deformities. In a short time more than eighty were gathered in a large

courtyard. They were mere samples of the entire mass. I assert without exaggeration that no power of language could describe the varieties and, I may say, the cruelties in all these degradations of the human form. They stood or squatted before me in the shapes of the letters of the alphabet. This was the effect of prolonged toil on the tender frames of children at carly ages."

But, though the need for further reform was thus urgent, years were still to pass before it was to be accomplished. Lord Ashley's Bill of 1838 was defeated by a narrow majority. A measure promoted by the Government in 1839 was withdrawn by its promoters, the House was counted out on a debate on the subject in 1840 and a Bill in 1841 fell in consequence of the dissolution. The change of Government during that year did not materially assist the cause of the operatives. Sir Robert Peel declined to support the Ten Hours Bill, and Sir James Graham, as Home Secretary, took the conduct of factory legislation into his own hands.

The contest thus begun lasted almost without intermission for another six years. Lord Ashley and his fellow-labourers called for their Bill and nothing but their Bill; they were supported by a constantly increasing section of Conservatives, on whom the claims of party discipline sat lightly, and by a large and important band of Whigs, which included Lord John Russell, Lord Howick, Sir George Grey, and other Whig leaders. They were opposed by most of the employers of labour and by all the official representatives of the Conservative party. We are far from blaming men like Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham for the course which they thus took. No doubt, now that experience has proved that their fears were unnecessary, their determined opposition to the ten-hours clause appears both unreasonable and unwise. Years afterwards, indeed, Sir James Graham admitted that

he had been wrong, and declared that the Factory Bill, "that great measure of relief for women and children, has contributed to the well-being and comfort of the working classes, whilst it has not injured the masters." But the consequences of the change were not so plain in 1844 as they appeared ten years afterwards. Men in responsible office naturally hesitated to incur the risk of deranging the labour market and of driving industry to other countries. The issue, no doubt, proved that they were wrong. But the readiness with which, in support of their opinions, they encountered abuse and defeat, shows at least that they were sincere.

At that time, too, the rapid extension of the movement which Lord Ashley was originating apparently justified the alarm which responsible statesmen were feeling. In 1840 Lord Ashley moved for a commission of inquiry into the labour of children in mines and collieries. In 1845 he introduced a Bill to regulate the labour of children in print works. The report which the Commission produced was called by Lord Ashley himself "that awful document" which excites "a feeling of shame, terror, and indignation." The few people still alive who have had occasion to consult it will not think this description of it an exaggeration.[1] But the sensation which the revelations

[1] One curious error was made in the debates on this report, which is perhaps worth relating. It was stated, I think by Lord Ashley, that a miner had thrown a hundredweight at a boy and hurt him seriously. The statement made some sensation, but admitted of a very simple explanation. The miners, an uneducated race, kept all their records in the mine by tallies, or, as they called them, cuts. A cut was a piece of wood on which notches for reckoning were made. It was given in evidence that a miner had thrown a cut at a boy and hurt him seriously. The clerk who copied out the evidence had never heard of a cut, and, changing one letter, wrote "cwt." The printer, improving on the error, gave the word at full—"hundredweight." I had the curiosity some years ago to search out the mistake in the very voluminous evidence attached to the Commissioners' report.

contained in it produced, though they strengthened Lord Ashley's hands, concurrently increased the alarms of large employers of labour. Their fears were intensified afterwards by Lord Ashley declaring on the Print Works Bill that he would never stop "so long as any portion of this mighty evil remains to be remedied." Such a declaration produced an impression that the representative of the operatives was engaged in a gigantic crusade against the employers of labour, and the latter, perhaps naturally, rallied in defence of their order.

So long as Sir Robert Peel's Administration endured, the opposition of the employers was, on the whole, successful. But after the formation of Lord John Russell's Ministry the question passed into another phase; the new Ministers were pledged to the support of its principles, and with their assistance the Bill became law. It is a striking proof of the singular ignorance of modern history that Conservative reviewers are fond of claiming the Ten Hours Bill as a Conservative measure. I myself have always thought that the credit which attaches to it was properly attributable to neither of the great parties in the State. But, however this may be, it is difficult to understand how it can justly be given to the Conservative party. For it is certain that, so long as the Conservatives were in office, their leaders successfully resisted the passage of the Bill, and that the measure, after their retirement, was carried with the active assistance of the Whig Ministers.

Lord Ashley was not in Parliament at the time at which the Ten Hours Bill became law. He had thought it right to resign his seat for a Protectionist county on the production of Sir Robert Peel's measure for securing Free Trade in corn, and he did not return to the House of Commons as member for Bath until after the Ten Hours Bill had been passed. Out of Parliament, however, he strenuously

supported the measure, and after 1847 he worked hard to ensure its enforcement. The Ten Hours Bill had enabled the manufacturers to commence work at half-past five a.m., and to continue working till half-past eight p.m., employing no young person, however, for more than ten hours during the fifteen. Some manufacturers endeavoured to evade the law by having relays or shifts of hands, so as to keep their machinery in motion for the whole time during which the mill could be legally open. The adult labourer was thus deprived of the protection which had indirectly been conferred on him by the regulation of infant labour, and the inspector found it impossible to ascertain what number of hours the children employed in the mills really worked. The Court of Exchequer decided that the masters were right in their construction of the statute; and Ministers, finding it impossible to prevent the evasion of the law, desired to effect a compromise. Lord Ashley, who had now returned to the House of Commons, found it necessary to cope with a new Factory Bill. By his efforts the working day for women and children, which by the Act of 1847 had commenced at 5.30 a.m. and continued to 8.30 p.m., was fixed to begin at 6 a.m. and to end at 6 p.m. As intervals of one hour and a half were allowed for meals, the effect of this measure was to extend the time of work from ten to ten and a half hours.

This compromise, which, like all compromises, was unpopular, practically endured for twenty years, when Mr. Cross (now Lord Cross), in consolidating the Factory Acts, reduced the hours of work to ten.

There is no need, at the present day, of insisting on the benefits which have resulted from the legislation which was thus carried. No one probably in the whole country would wish to return to the gross evils which the Factory Acts remedied. But it may be desirable to point out the vast extent of the protection which has been accorded by

these Acts. Lord Shaftesbury himself said in 1874 that the Protective Acts in the Statute Book now cover a population of nearly 2,500,000 persons. The women and children thus protected were nearly four times as numerous as the slaves in British colonies in 1833. When the abolition of the slave trade was finally accomplished in 1807, Sir Samuel Romilly raised an unreformed House of Commons to a height of unúsual enthusiasm by a graceful allusion to that honoured individual who would "this day lay his head upon his pillow, and remember that the slave trade was no more." Yet the contest which Lord Ashley had waged was at least as stubborn as that in which Mr. Wilberforce had been engaged, and the evils which he had terminated affected the happiness of individuals as numerous and as helpless as the negroes sold into slavery in the West Indies.

"The rewards of virtue exceed those of ambition," and we hope that it may have been so with Lord Ashley. For, if his conduct of factory legislation made his name a household word, it deprived him of political advancement, and it exposed him to painful differences with his own father. We have already seen that Lord Ashley, soon after his entry into Parliament, received honourable and useful office in the Wellington Administration. He perhaps naturally thought that, as he had gained the first rung in the ladder, his future promotion was assured; and he was undoubtedly disappointed when, in 1835, on the formation of his short-lived administration, Sir Robert Peel only offered him a seat at the Board of Admiralty.

"Had I not, by God's grace and the study of religion," so he wrote at the time, "subdued the passion of my youth, I should now have been heartbroken. Canning, *eight years ago*, offered me, as a neophyte, a seat at one of the boards, the first step in a young statesman's life. If I am not now

worthy of more, it is surely better to cease to be a candidate for public honours."

The Prime Minister induced him on that occasion to reconsider his refusal of office by explaining to him that it was intended that he should represent his department in the House of Commons. During the ministerial crisis of 1839, however, Sir Robert Peel made Lord Ashley a much more singular offer. "The formation of a Cabinet," so he said, was "a trifle" compared with the composition of the Household; Lord Ashley's character and his connection with the religious societies marked him out as a proper attendant on a "young woman on whose moral and religious character the welfare of millions of human beings depended;" and he prevailed on Lord Ashley to say that, if the Minister really and truly thought he could serve his purpose, he would "accept the office of chief scullion" at Court. In 1841 Sir Robert Peel reverted to this proposal. But Lord Ashley replied that the "case was altered; the Court was no longer the same; the Queen was two years older, had a child, and a husband to take care of her." In short, there were not the same reasons as in 1839 for surrounding her with the influence of religious men; and Lord Ashley declined to devote his energies to "ordering dinners and carrying a white wand." His decision, we have no doubt, was wise. The duties of a court would have been as irksome and ill-suited to Lord Ashley as they had proved half a century before to Miss Burney. But we are not so sure as Lord Shaftesbury and his biographer that Sir Robert Peel was insincere in making the offer. After all, it was a great object to surround her Majesty with men of principle and character; and it was not so plain in 1841 as it is now that Lord Ashley had higher work before him which had more pressing claims on his abilities.

However that may be, Sir Robert Peel in 1845 was ready to make our hero a much more suitable offer. He wished

him to take the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, an office which at that time was free from some of the inconveniences which attach to it now, and which was one of the most responsible and useful situations outside the Cabinet.[1] Lord Ashley, however, considered that he could not accept the office unless the Minister was prepared to support the Ten Hours Bill. He could hardly have expected that a strong administration would recast its policy for the sake of securing his support, and the offer accordingly fell through. Years afterwards the late Lord Derby offered him the Duchy of Lancaster and a seat in the Cabinet, and the offer was again refused on the old grounds. There still remained "1,400,000 women, children, and young persons to be brought under the protection of the Factory Acts," and while the law was still inapplicable to them his duties lay elsewhere.

So far, then, as worldly advancement was concerned Lord Ashley deliberately sacrificed it to the cause which he had adopted. And the sacrifice, it should be recollected to his honour, was no slight one. Lord Ashley was never one of those who could say, in Lord Tennyson's fine language—

"Fame! what is fame to me?"

On the contrary, he had a keen ambition to be recollected both as great and good. And the loss of office was not the only sacrifice to which he submitted. The course that he "had marked out for himself had, from the first, met with the strong disapprobation of his father;" and Lord Ashley for ten years—from 1829 to 1839—was estranged from his father's home. Unhappily, a reconciliation, effected in 1839, did not last long. The large

[1] Mr. Hodder says in the Cabinet (vol. i. p. 350); but I imagine this to be an error. Then, as now, the Chief Secretaryship was occasionally, but not usually, accompanied with a seat in the Cabinet.

manufacturers, smarting under Lord Ashley's attacks on the condition of the operatives whom they employed, were asking why his charity did not begin at home; and even Miss Martineau, writing as an historian, declared that "he need but have gone into the hovels of his father's peasantry to have seen misery and mental and moral destitution which could not be matched in the worst retreats of the manufacturing population." Sensitive to a fault, Lord Ashley winced under this censure, and took occasion at a meeting at Sturminster to utter what he called himself "some strong truths respecting wages, dwellings, truck, delay of payment, and exclusion from gleaning." His father was annoyed—was perhaps naturally annoyed—at this language. He told Lord Ashley that he was exciting the people: "they got on very well, he did not know how, with seven and even six shillings a week; that their wages (and he then passed through all the arguments) could not be raised. . . . As for their dwellings, it was very easy to point out the evil: where was the remedy? He, at least, could not afford it . . . had been engaged all his life in gradually abating the mischief; these things cost too much."

Thus the cause which Lord Ashley had adopted not only brought him public disappointment, but private anxiety. He was learning the truth of a prediction which the *Examiner* made that "this young lord must expect, if he go about telling every one the plain truth, to become odious;" and, while some men were reviling him for doing nothing, "he was turned out of his father's house for doing too much." Sympathising, as we do, with Lord Ashley, we cannot avoid seeing that there was much reason on his father's side. No one likes his own shortcomings publicly exposed in his own neighbourhood by his own son, and it is not plain that the old lord was wrong in urging that he could do nothing. When Lord Ashley, eight years after

the Sturminster speech, became Lord Shaftesbury, he had a painful awakening to the difficulties of a landlord :—

"Inspected a few cottages—filthy, close, indecent, unwholesome. But what can I do? I am half pauperised; the debts are endless; no money is payable for a whole year; and I am not a young man. Every sixpence I expend—and spend I must on many things—is *borrowed*."

The debt on the estate hung upon him like a nightmare, and it was only after a desperate struggle of a quarter of a century that "by hook and by crook, by dodges and devices, by small sales of outlying property, and disposal of tithes to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (he) paid off, at last, the ruinous mortgage on the St. Giles estate."

We hope that his own embarrassments may, at least, have induced him to understand his father's difficulties, and to realise the causes of what he calls—we trust by an exaggeration—his father's hatred.

We have dwelt at some length on the efforts which Lord Ashley made in the cause of factory operatives, because the Factory Acts were the great work of his life, the achievement for which he will be always recollected. But it must be remembered that this legislation forms only one portion of his labours, and that he was throughout his career associated with many other movements for the relief of suffering. So early as 1828 he seconded a motion for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to lunatic asylums; as he said himself, "seventeen years of labour and anxiety obtained the Lunacy Bill in 1845," and from this date till his death forty years afterwards he was the unpaid but hardworking chairman of the Lunacy Commissioners. It was in a debate on this subject that Mr. Sheil paid him the graceful and well-deserved compliment :—

"There is something of a *sursum corda* in all that the noble lord says. . . . It may be truly stated that 'he has

added nobility even to the name of Ashley, and that he has made humanity one of Shaftesbury's Characteristics.'"

The passage of the Factory Acts and the reform and administration of the lunacy laws would, if they had stood alone, have justified Mr. Sheil's praise. But Lord Ashley never allowed his devotion to one cause to blind him to the necessities of any other classes. During the years in which his time was thus occupied, he succeeded, after a protracted struggle, in preventing children being employed in climbing chimneys; he was dealing with juvenile mendicancy and youthful offenders by persuading the Legislature to sanction the institution of reformatory schools; he was promoting the establishment and providing for the regulation and inspection of model lodging-houses, a measure which Mr. Dickens described as "the best law ever passed by an English Parliament"; and he was presiding as unpaid chairman over the councils of the Board of Health. It would be impossible within any reasonable limits to describe the objects and nature of these various labours; but it may be of some little interest to recall the main features of the struggle which ultimately led to the prohibition of the employment of climbing boys. Perhaps few things illustrate more accurately the slow and gradual manner in which humanity advanced in the old days, or the rapid progress which it made during the reign of our late Queen.

For more than a century good men had drawn attention to the miseries of climbing boys.

"In 1760 a letter appeared in the *Public Advertiser* advocating the cause of the little sweeps, and, in particular, suggesting that masters should be punished if they let their apprentices go about without proper covering. Among the readers of that letter was Jonas Hanway, a fellow-worker with Robert Raikes in founding Sunday schools. . . . In 1785 Hanway published his 'Senti-

mental History of Chimney Sweepers in London and Westminster,' showing the necessity of putting them under regulation to prevent the grossest inhumanity to the climbing boys, &c. Three years afterwards Parliament was induced to pass an Act forbidding master chimney-sweeps to have more than six apprentices, or to take them under eight years of age. And this was all that could be wrung from Parliament for nearly fifty years. . . . Attempts were vainly made in 1804, 1807, 1808, and 1809 to induce Parliament to grant the little chimney-sweepers further protection. The subject was referred in 1817 to a Select Committee, and the printed report is a record of sickening horrors. It reveals how children of a suitable size were stolen for the purpose, sold by their parents, inveigled from workhouses, or apprenticed by poor law guardians, and forced up chimneys by cruel blows, by pricking the soles of the feet, or by applying wisps of lighted straw. . . . All this was set forth for the benefit of both Houses of Parliament, and made known to the public in a harrowing article by Sydney Smith in the *Edinburgh Review*. The Commons passed an amending Bill to improve the Act of 1788, but it was thrown out on a third reading in the House of Lords. In 1834 an Act was passed with stricter clauses for ensuring that no apprentice should be employed under ten years of age. It was also made a misdemeanour to send a child up a chimney on fire for the purpose of extinguishing it. Hitherto this atrocity had been of frequent occurrence."

In the beginning of the late reign the improvement of machinery deprived the master sweeps of the last excuse for employing little children in sweeping chimneys; and the exertions of Mr. Stevens, the secretary to a large insurance company, induced the insurance offices to see that "the old system was as unnecessary as it was cruel."

A measure was passed in 1840 punishing with fine all who should compel, or knowingly allow, any one under the age of twenty-one years to ascend or descend a chimney, or enter a flue for the purpose of cleaning it. Lord Ashley took a leading part in the debates on this Bill, and after its passage he used his utmost efforts to secure obedience to it. In some instances he even brought test actions against persons who infringed the law. Abuses, however, die slowly. For more than thirty years after the Bill of 1840 became law "little children, from four to eight years of age, the majority of them orphans, the rest bartered or sold by brutal parents, were trained to force their way up the long, narrow, winding passages of chimneys, to clear away the soot." In 1851, in 1853, and in 1854 Lord Shaftesbury, as I shall in future call him in this essay, vainly endeavoured to induce Parliament to deal effectually with this cruel wrong, and in 1864 he actually succeeded in carrying a Bill which made it unlawful for a chimney-sweeper to take into a house with him any assistant under sixteen years of age, and which empowered magistrates, in case of a breach of the law, "to impose imprisonment with hard labour instead of a fine." But even this measure did not terminate the prevalent abuses. In 1872 Lord Shaftesbury was "stirred" by learning that a poor climbing boy had been suffocated in a flue in Staffordshire. In the following year he drew public attention to the case of a "poor little chimney-sweeper, seven and a half years old, killed in a flue at Washington, in the county of Durham." In February, 1875, George Brewster, a boy of fourteen, was suffocated in a flue in Cambridge. But this case at last excited the public mind. George Brewster's master was sentenced to six months' hard labour; the *Times* declared that his employers were morally guilty of the crime of murder; and Lord Shaftesbury, strengthened by popular excitement, was

able at last to carry an effectual measure for the suppression of the practice.

In relating Lord Shaftesbury's efforts in the cause both of the factory operatives and of the climbing boys, we have been necessarily dwelling on public labours undertaken in the cause of humanity. But we should give a very imperfect idea of the work which Lord Shaftesbury accomplished if we did not describe the private efforts made by him rather as an individual than a statesman in the cause of the poor. Much, indeed, as we admire the perseverance which characterised Lord Shaftesbury's legislative achievements, we are still more impressed by the toils which he undertook for the sake of relieving distress or reducing vice in the darkest corners of the Metropolis. In his public career, indeed, our judgment cannot always follow him and we think that he was occasionally unjust to those who thought it their duty to oppose him. But on his private career we have no such criticism to offer; the head goes with the heart in saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Let us enumerate only a few of the movements with which Lord Shaftesbury was thus associated. He was the first president of the Ragged School Union, and one of the earliest, most active, and most persevering promoters of ragged schools. He assisted in founding the Labourers' Friend Society, or, as it was afterwards called, the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes; and, in connection with the society, he exposed "the shameful dwellings in which the poor were compelled to live," and urged on the public the duty of remedying the evils inseparable from them. He was the earliest advocate, if not the originator, of the model lodging-house system. He was one of the fathers of the Shoe Black Brigade. He was one of the founders of night refuges for casual vagrants, and of permanent refuges for the support and

education of outcast children. He promoted, with the best results, the emigration of children from ragged schools; and he persuaded the Government to place a fifty-ton frigate, the *Chichester*, in the Thames, on board of which destitute and homeless boys could be trained for the navy. He took up the cause of the costermongers, threw himself into their work, and gained their confidence. He established, in connection with the Watercress and Flower Girls' Mission, a fund out of which loans were made to deserving women to help them in their business. He constantly presided over the flower shows held in Dean's Yard under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Window Gardening. He was ready to attend a thieves' meeting, and to confer with them on their future. He was the welcome visitor at the poorest and vilest houses of the London poor.

Such was some of the work which Lord Shaftesbury undertook and accomplished. His biographer tells us, on more than one occasion, of the apt manner in which he addressed himself to the strange audiences which it was almost the business of his life to collect around him. We confess that we are not surprised at his winning the hearts of the poor when we read of some of his sayings. At one of the costermongers' meetings, for instance, Lord Shaftesbury told the men, when they had grievances which he could assist them to get redressed, to be sure to write to him. "But where shall we write to?" asked one of them. "Address your letter to me at Grosvenor Square, and it will probably reach me," he replied; "but if after my name you put 'K.G. and Coster' there will be no doubt that I shall get it." "But will you ever come back to see us again?" was the inquiry of a thief at a thieves' meeting. "Yes," was the reply, "at any time and at any place, whenever you shall send for me." "Please, sir, may I give you a kiss?" said a little girl to him at one of the Dean's

Yard flower shows. "I said, 'I am sure you may, my dear, and I will give you one too.'" It was at one of these shows, after the death of his wife, that he made the beautiful remark, "The garden of Paradise was only to be approached through the garden of Gethsemane"; and a voice cried out from the crowd, "That is the best thing you have said."

Sayings of this kind, slight in themselves, form the best evidence of the deep sympathy which was at once the cause of Lord Shaftesbury's influence with the poor, and the stimulant to his own exertions in their behalf. He, indeed, would probably have given a different reason for his life's work. His actions, he would certainly have said, were based on his religion, and his exertions for struggling humanity were the consequence of his creed. But men do not always understand their own motives so clearly as bystanders; and to us at any rate it is plain that the deep love of mankind which distinguished Lord Shaftesbury would have animated him under any circumstances. He was not good because he was religious; he was religious because he was good.

In recording this conviction, however, we have no desire to ignore the influence which religion had on Lord Shaftesbury's life. His faith was a part of the man, and his character will never be understood by any one who does not realise the deep conviction with which he clung to his creed. "I am essentially, and from deep-rooted conviction"—so he said on one occasion—"an evangelical of the evangelicals;" and his whole public and private influence was thrown into the ranks of that party in the Church. He regarded "the only conservative principle the Protestant religion as embodied in the doctrines and framework of the Church of England;" and he thought Tahiti "the only kingdom which, from its head to its feet, in all its private and public relations, in all that it said, permitted, or did,

was a Christian State, founded on the truths of the Gospel, and governed by the simplicity of God's word." When we read this remarkable opinion, we could only entertain a sincere hope that Lord Shaftesbury did not know much about Tahiti. He had no more doubt of the literal inspiration of the Bible than of the efficacy of prayer. He was as certain as of his "own existence that science, in a more extended compass, long, very long, before it is perfect, will be the surest, stoutest, most irresistible apology for the Bible in the whole history of facts and arguments since controversy began. It will prove the Mosaic Creation, the authenticity of the Pentateuch; it will establish the Deluge and Noah's Ark. It will render all Joshua credible; the miracles of Moses and the Red Sea. It will make every syllable of the Old and New Testament as clear and certain to our minds and souls as hunger and thirst, food and raiment, pain and pleasure, are to our bodies." Under these circumstances he was a stout opponent of Biblical revision, which in his eyes opened a prospect "of confusion, distrust, doubt, difficulty, enmity, and opposition;" and he was a warm supporter of the decision of the Bible Society to celebrate its jubilee by presenting one million New Testaments, in the Chinese language, to the people of China. With these views, it was natural that he should regard with horror any works which endeavoured to reconcile the language of the Bible with modern thought. He declared of "Essays and Reviews" that "if that book were true, the Bible must be false." He regarded Bishop Colenso's work on the Pentateuch as "a puerile and ignorant attack on the sacred and unassailable Word of God." He said that the "Vie de Jésus" was written by M. Renan "for the most iniquitous purposes;" and he denounced "Ecce Homo" as the most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of hell: as for the "Leben Jesu," the death of Strauss induced him to make this horrible entry in his diary:—

"In the *Times* of three days ago I saw announced the death of Strauss! 'We shall soon know the grand secret,' said the murderer Thistlewood, of Cato Street—so the chaplain of Newgate, who was near him, told me—just before he was executed. Strauss knows it now. The thought is awful beyond expression."

Lord Shaftesbury himself wrote: "I bless God that we are hereafter to be judged by Christ, and not by Calvin." We only hope that this extract, and not the other, represents the more accurately Lord Shaftesbury's true feelings.

Holding these opinions, Lord Shaftesbury, though he regarded himself as a sound Churchman, did and said things which he could hardly expect to be acceptable to all parties in the Church. The elder Wilberforce complained in his diary that the Bishops gave him no support in his efforts to promote Christianity in India. In similar language Lord Shaftesbury grumbled at the Bishops going away to dinner when the Vivisection Bill was before the Lords. "Of what use," he went on to ask, "are the Bishops in the House of Lords?" In the height of the excitement on the so-called Papal aggression in 1850, he publicly declared that he would "rather worship with Lydia on the bank by the riverside than with a hundred surpliced priests in the temple of St. Barnabas" (*i.e.*, in St. Barnabas Church, Pimlico). Many of his warmest efforts in the cause of humanity were made in close association with Nonconformists; he encountered opposition from many Churchmen in his persistent and successful efforts to organise religious services for the people in the halls and theatres of the Metropolis. He called an education rate "a water rate to extinguish religious fire among young people." He said of a service at St. Alban's, Holborn: "In outward form and ritual it is the worship of Jupiter and Juno." Like other men, too, of his school of thought, with no intention of irreverence, he used Scripture texts in a manner which seems irreverent to other people.

Of the galleries at Bologna he wrote, for example, "One day in thy *courts* is better than a thousand." The flaps of the envelopes which he daily used bore the inscription "Even so come, Lord Jesus" in the original Greek. The contest for the Oxford professorship of poetry in 1841–42 led to a controversy between Dr. Pusey and himself which interrupted their friendship for many years; and we regret to add that, in charity and tolerance, the honour in this unhappy quarrel did not lie with Lord Shaftesbury.

In a religious sense, however, the two most important incidents in Lord Shaftesbury's career remain to be noticed. The first was the institution of the Jerusalem bishopric; the second the influence which he exercised on Lord Palmerston's ecclesiastical appointments. In 1838 Lord Shaftesbury had been singularly affected by the appointment of an English Vice-Consul at Jerusalem. "If this is duly considered," he wrote, "what a wonderful event it is! The ancient city of the people of God is about to resume a place among the nations, and England is the first of Gentile nations that ceases to tread her down. . . . I shall always remember that God put it into my heart to conceive this plan for His honour, gave me influence to prevail with Palmerston, and provided a man for the situation who 'can remember Jerusalem in his mirth.' Wrote by him a few lines to Pieritz, and sent him a very small sum of money for the Hebrew converts there (I wish it were larger), that I might revive the practice of apostolic times (Romans xv. 26), and 'make a certain contribution for the poor saints that are at Jerusalem.'" In the same year he contributed an article to the *Quarterly Review*, in which, in speaking of a proposal to found a church in Jerusalem, if possible on Mount Zion itself, he declared that "a small but faithful congregation of proselytes hear daily the evangelical verities of our Church on the mount of the holy city itself, in the language of the prophets, and in the spirit of the apostles.

To any one who reflects on this event, it must appear one of the most striking that have occurred in modern days, perhaps in any days since the corruptions began in the Church of Christ." These being his feelings, it will readily be understood that he regarded, three years later, the institution of the bishopric of Jerusalem with enthusiasm. "May the blessing of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the father of our Lord Jesús Christ, be with it now and for ever! I wish I had put in detail the whole progress of this wonderful measure, of all I have said, felt, and done in it; but time has failed me for half of the things I would perform or write." Dr. Alexander was selected for the new bishopric at his suggestion; and the choice was certainly a happy one. "The successor of St. James," wrote M. Bunsen, "is by birth an Israelite; born a Prussian; belonging to the Church of England; ripened (by hard work) in Ireland; twenty years professor of Hebrew in King's College." At Lord Shaftesbury's suggestion, too, the Government acceded to his "main and most dear object . . . the grant of a steamboat to carry out the bishop to Jaffa." It is true that even at that time some mutterings among Churchmen betrayed the disagreement which the new policy was exciting. Alas for "the monstrosities of Puseyism! The Bishop of London is beset and half browbeaten by the clamorous and uncatholic race;" and Mr. Hodder might perhaps have reminded us that the institution of the new bishopric drove Mr. Newman from the Church of England, and that Mr. Bright afterwards complained in the House of Commons that the new bishop had travelled in a steam-frigate, the *Devastation*, and had landed "within a stone's throw, no doubt, of the house in which an apostle lived, under a salute of twenty-one guns."

Looking back now at these events over an interval of more than half a century, we see them dwindled to their true proportions by the perspective of time; and the en-

thusiasm which they excited in Lord Shaftesbury seems as much out of place as the alarm which they created in Mr. Newman. Mr. Newman, on his part, lived to admit that he had "never heard of any good or harm that bishopric has done;" and when Bishop Alexander died, four years after his consecration, Lord Shaftesbury concluded that "the thing was not according to God's wisdom and pleasure." And so, though he attended the consecration of Dr. Gobat, Dr. Alexander's successor, he seems to have taken very little further interest in this famous bishopric.

But, if the concern which Lord Shaftesbury had in the Jerusalem bishopric did not lead to the result which he expected from it, the influence which, at a later period of his career, he exercised in the choice of Church dignitaries at home was attended with great, we had almost written lasting, consequences. It is not too much to say that, during Lord Palmerston's Administration, Lord Shaftesbury practically appointed all the bishops that were made; and that, as an exceptionally large number of bishoprics fell vacant at the time, he succeeded in imparting tone and colour of his own to the Episcopal bench.

It will be recollected that Lord Shaftesbury was married to Lady Emily Cowper, the daughter of Lord and Lady Cowper. Lord Cowper died in 1837, and in 1839 his widow, Lady Cowper, was married to Lord Palmerston. This marriage made Lord Shaftesbury the son-in-law of the lady who was the centre of London society, and whose husband was perhaps the ablest member of the Whig party and the most popular Prime Minister of the century. From one point of view there was little in common between the two peers who were thus thrown together. According to Lord Shaftesbury himself, Lord Palmerston did "not know, in theology, Moses from Sydney Smith;" and his brisk, happy temperament formed a striking contrast to the puritanic gloom which shrouded Lord Shaftesbury's brow and

hardened his features. Yet these two men were drawn together in the closest friendship. Lord Shaftesbury excused in Lord Palmerston language which he would have denounced with the gravest censure if it had proceeded from any other person. He received from Lord Palmerston, on more than one occasion, the most munificent assistance and the wisest and kindest advice; he accepted from Lord Palmerston the Garter, which he refused when it was offered to him by Lord Aberdeen; and, when Lord Palmerston died, he recorded the fact in his diary in these words:—

"I lose a man who, I know, esteemed and loved me far beyond every other man living. He showed it in every action of his heart, in every expression of his lips, in private and in public, as a man, as a relative, and as a minister. His society was infinitely agreeable to me; and I admired, every day more, his patriotism, his simplicity of purpose, his indefatigable spirit of labour, his unfailing good humour, his kindness of heart, and his prompt, tender, and active consideration for others in the midst of his heaviest toils and anxieties."

Some of the most pleasant pages in Lord Shaftesbury's biography are those which are devoted to the relations between these men. But we have no space in this essay to dwell on the private intercourse of the two friends. We only allude to it because it explains the influence which Lord Shaftesbury exercised on Lord Palmerston's Church appointments, and which made him for some years the bishop-maker of the Ministry.

Mr. Hodder has given in his third volume a complete list of the bishoprics and deaneries which were thus filled by Lord Palmerston, almost uniformly on Lord Shaftesbury's advice. We have no desire to criticise these appointments. All of them were those of men to whose qualifications it is difficult to take exception. But we

should imagine that, though each individual appointment stands in need of no apology, few persons would care to defend the list as a whole. Lord Shaftesbury himself admits that "the first bishops were decidedly of the Evangelical school;" but the later bishops were, almost without exception, taken from the same school. Grave offence was consequently given to the High Church party. "To yield everything to a Ministry," wrote Bishop Wilberforce, "which every sound Churchman feels insults the Church almost every time it has to recommend to the Crown a bishopric, is exceedingly hard."

We have purposely refrained throughout this essay from expressing any opinion on Lord Shaftesbury's peculiar religious views, and we have contented ourselves with allowing Lord Shaftesbury to speak for himself, without expressing either concurrence in, or dissent from, his opinions. Whatever judgment, however, others may pronounce on the merits of Lord Shaftesbury's creed, his warmest admirers will hardly claim for it breadth or comprehension. So long, indeed, as the narrow views which he held on religion only affected his own life, the public had no concern with them. But things were very different when Lord Shaftesbury became the chief adviser of the Ministry on ecclesiastical subjects. The Church of England, whether we like the fact or not, comprises in its fold men who hold widely diverging views on many points of doctrine. It has been the fortunate result of recent decisions of the Privy Council to enlarge the foundations on which the Church is built; and the wisest men are almost unanimous in thinking that, if the Church fail to be comprehensive, it will cease to be national. Yet no one can doubt that if the policy, which Lord Shaftesbury originated, had been pursued a little longer, the whole basis of the Church must have been narrowed. A steady determination to select all its dignitaries from a single

school might have encouraged uniformity of doctrine, but must ultimately have driven from the fold the men who were thus practically told that they had neither part nor lot in its heritage.

So far, then, as the public consequences of Lord Shaftesbury's religious views were concerned—and we repeat that we confine ourselves to the public results of his opinions—there is little either to praise or to admire. The Jerusalem bishopric was a failure, and the Church appointments were exclusive and therefore objectionable. But we are not inclined to judge Lord Shaftesbury severely on these accounts. We recollect, and sympathise with, the reproof of the little shoeblack: "Don't you speak against Lord Shaftesbury, sir; if you do, God Almighty will never bless you." We feel that Lord Shaftesbury is to be remembered not for what he said or thought, but for what he did; and that, if his opinions were narrower than those of his age, his sympathies were broader than those even of the best of his contemporaries.

We have already described the main achievements of Lord Shaftesbury's career. But, before we close our subject altogether, we wish to dwell on the chief characteristics of his work. And, in the first place, we ought, perhaps, to point out that, though he was the greatest philanthropist of his age, he originated nothing. Mr. Sadler preceded him in the Ten Hours' Bill; Mr. Robert Gordon introduced the Bill to regulate lunatic asylums, which was the subject of Lord Shaftesbury's first speech in Parliament. It was a Bill in Parliament, introduced on other responsibility, which directed his attention to the wrongs of climbing boys. It was an advertisement in the *Times* which gave him his first interest in ragged schools and Field Lane. Mr. S. R. Starey, a solicitor's clerk, was the founder of the Ragged School Union; Mr. W. J. Orsman, a civil servant, was the

first to devote himself "to the hard task of evangelising the benighted costermongers;" and we might probably show that nearly all the movements with which Lord Shaftesbury's name is associated were originated by others and not by himself. But if Lord Shaftesbury cannot have the credit of originating work of this kind, he had, at least, the rare distinction of selecting for encouragement schemes which were both good and wise, and his energy and determination were the forces which made these schemes successful. He rarely adopted a cause, however hopeless, which he did not galvanise into life; he seldom joined a movement, however humble or obscure, which he did not make known and popular.

His position and his rank were, no doubt, powerful aids to him. People who would not have listened to Mr. Starey or Mr. Orsman, were forced to attend to Lord Ashley or Lord Shaftesbury. But position and rank alone would have been powerless but for his perseverance and his enthusiasm. He succeeded in what he undertook because he believed in what he attempted. His convictions were so strong that he was rarely able either to appreciate or to understand those who happened to oppose him. And those who condemn the harsh judgments and gloomy ideas which were the natural outcome of his narrow opinions should recollect that faith in his creed sustained him in his labours, and never failed him in his philanthropic efforts.

But there is another and still more noteworthy circumstance about Lord Shaftesbury's achievements. If he rarely undertook a work which he did not carry on to victory, he still more rarely adopted a movement which did not lead to beneficial consequences. In this age, fortunately, many wealthy and earnest men are anxious to assist in relieving the distress which we all deplore; but some, perhaps most, of them are deterred by the consciousness that charity frequently does more harm than good.

Mr. Thackeray's cynical remark in the "Newcomes," "The wicked are wicked, no doubt, and they go astray, and they fall, and they come by their deserts; but who can tell the mischief that the very virtuous do?"—is emphasised by the striking verdict, which we think was pronounced by the late Mr. W. R. Greg, that the wise men of the world pass most of their time in undoing the harm which the good men of the world are doing. If we are tempted to give to a poor man in the streets, we recollect the example of Archbishop Whately, who, on principle, always refused to relieve a beggar. If we contribute to a public fund for the relief of distress, we are sure to learn, from some source or other, that the money thus spent is actually creating the pauperism which it was intended to mitigate. If even we subscribe to a hospital, we are assured that many persons who could afford to pay for their own medical attendance, are unfairly availing themselves of the advantages which the institution offers. We suppose that Lord Shaftesbury was sometimes imposed upon like other benevolent men, and that he was occasionally deceived by vice when he thought that he was assisting virtue. But we imagine that no man, of whom we have any knowledge, whose benevolence was equally wide, made fewer mistakes. His efforts to excite the public charity, numerous as they were, are uniformly such as the reason can approve; and we feel, while we read, that, whether he was labouring to reduce the hours of infant labour, to improve the administration of lunatic asylums, to reclaim the vicious, to protect the waif, to improve the dwellings of the poor, or to open out in new countries a fresh career for those who had no chance at home, he was working on right lines—on lines which were calculated not merely to relieve the misery which he found, but to diminish, to a certain extent, the growth of wretchedness afterwards.

Those who have followed Lord Shaftesbury's career will observe with regret, but perhaps without surprise, that his life, however useful, was far from happy. Perhaps, indeed, happiness is not attainable by those who are best acquainted with the condition of society. The consciousness of a vast sea of seething misery and sin, which even workers like Lord Shaftesbury are only able slightly to reduce, and with which most men are incompetent even to contend, fills both the thinkers and the workers of the world with a despair which is incompatible with happiness. For these reasons we do not believe that the best and most thoughtful men can ever be included among the happiest of mankind. But Lord Shaftesbury, we imagine, under no circumstances could have led a life of enjoyment. His religious opinions and his sensitive nature both interfered with his pleasure. At Carlsbad in 1843 he was momentarily made happy by drinking "coffee *sub Jove* on the esplanade of the Wiese," and it occurred to him, as it has occurred to many other tourists, that foreigners "surpass us in the nature and variety of their social enjoyments. What," he went on to say, "could surpass the simple and cheap luxury of a pretty scene, a splendid day, delicious air, well-dressed company, green trees, and coffee and milk enough to satisfy five persons for about a shilling?" Verily we should have imagined that the sternest puritan might have temporarily surrendered himself to such simple pleasures without remorse. Not so, however, Lord Shaftesbury. The trail of the serpent was over it all. "Such a facility and such a character of amusement would prove my ruin; I should fall like Hannibal's soldiers at Capua, and surrender all sense of duty, all effort for mankind, to the overwhelming fascinations of ease and selfishness."

Thus with Lord Shaftesbury the bow was always strung; and, if all work and no play did not make him dull, he

became prematurely sad. This sadness, moreover, was increased by the sensitiveness which made him wince under criticism. In the height of the factory agitation, the employers of labour naturally said many hard things of him. But, instead of recollecting that their opposition was after all compensated by the enthusiastic admiration of the working classes, he persuaded himself that he was the object of "constant, minute, and pointed hatred." Perhaps such an impression may have been not unnatural amidst the anxiety and abuse of a great struggle.[1] But thirty years afterwards, when he was perhaps more respected and more popular than any man in England, he could use almost the same language: "I am making enemies on all sides, and God, as ever, is my only friend."

Thus a sensitive, we had almost written a morbid, nature threw a perpetual gloom over Lord Shaftesbury, and carved those deep furrows in his countenance which all who knew him will remember. But, besides the trouble which he thus made for himself, he had anxieties and sorrows to endure which left their mark on his character. In the first place, his means were never adequate for his wants. He complained in 1846 that more than half of his income was borrowed "to be repaid at some future day with heavy cumulations of interest;" that he had eight children, the two eldest costing him £200 a year each; that he had a ninth coming; and that the allowance from his "father was only £100 more than that which he had received as a bachelor at Oxford." To-

[1] The abuse was occasionally funny. When Lord Shaftesbury was engaged in the anti-slavery campaign, one of the religious papers of the Southern States wrote:—"Who is this Earl of Shaftesbury? Some unknown lordling; one of your modern philanthropists suddenly started up to take part in a passing agitation. It is a pity he does not look at home. Where was he when Lord Ashley was so nobly fighting for the Factory Bill, and pleading the cause of the English slave? We never even heard the name of this Lord Shaftesbury *then*."

wards the close of his life he was cheated by his steward, and "incurred expenses, amounting to some thousands of pounds, in inevitable lawsuits, civil and criminal." Overwhelmed by sadness and despair, he declared that "our blessed Lord endured all the sorrows of humanity but that of debt. Perhaps it was to exemplify the truth, afterwards uttered by St. Paul, 'Owe no man anything but to serve him in the Lord.'"

Pecuniary embarrassments, moreover, were not Lord Shaftesbury's only trouble. His second son Francis, a boy of much promise, died at Harrow in 1849; his son Maurice, the victim of a sad malady, was removed while his parents were abroad in 1855; his daughter Mary died of consumption after a lingering illness in 1861; another daughter, Constance, died of the same disease in 1872; and Lady Shaftesbury was herself taken from him in the same year. Such losses necessarily saddened Lord Shaftesbury's declining years. He paid the penalty, which is perhaps inseparable from age, of seeing those who were nearest and dearest to him go before.

Yet, if he were gloomy from his opinions and saddened by his personal trials, we cannot help hoping that, in his declining years, he must have felt a pleasure which a hasty perusal of his biography will hardly reveal. In the satisfaction inseparable from success, in the knowledge that the world at large had at last adopted his opinions on social subjects, in the approval and admiration of his friends, and in the respect and affection of the people, he must, we trust, have found both his consolation and his reward.

Signs of approval reached him from many quarters. "Over his bed in Grosvenor Square hung a handsome sampler worked by factory girls, the first-fruits of their leisure hours; the clock in his dining-room was presented to him by flower and watercress girls; his bed coverlet, under

which at St. Giles he always slept, was made out of little bits of materials, with a figure in the middle and a large letter S, the work of a number of ragged children." But perhaps the most eloquent tribute was paid to him by Dean Stanley in 1873, when Lord Shaftesbury, after his wife's death, begged the Committee to procure some new and younger chairman for the annual flower show in Dean's Yard, adding that he was in the condition of a tree which, as Lucan says, casts a shadow no longer with its leaves, but only by its stem. The Dean's reply was published, after Lord Shaftesbury's death, in the *Times;* it has been republished by Mr. Hodder, but it will bear quoting again :—

> "'Trunco, non frondibus, efficit umbram,'
> Well said old Lucan. Often have I seen
> A stripling tree, all foliage and all green;
> But not a hope of grateful, soothing shade,
> Its empty strength in fluttering leaves displayed.
> Give me the solid trunk, the aged stem,
> That rears its scant but glorious diadem?
> That through long years of battle or of storm
> Has striven all forests round it to reform;
> That plants its roots too deep for men to shake;
> That rears its head too high for grief to break;
> That still, thro' lightning flash and thunder stroke,
> Retains its vital sap and heart of oak.
> Such gallant tree for me shall ever stand
> A great rock's shadow in a weary land."

For twelve years more after these lines were written the good old tree still reared its crest unbroken in the forest, a shelter for the weak, a beacon for all. At the end of that time "a troublesome complaint, which had produced great weakness, made rest and change of air indispensable, and towards the end of July," 1885, Lord Shaftesbury went down to Folkestone. There, "free from great distressing pain, with consciousness perfectly clear, surrounded by his

sons and daughters, whom he loved with an untold and untellable love, undisturbed by any fear of death, unshaken in faith, and in full assurance of hope, he calmly awaited the end." And on October 1, 1885, it was possible to say of him too—

> "Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

SOME DECISIVE MARRIAGES OF ENGLISH HISTORY

MANY years ago a capable writer wrote a well-known book which he called "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." Some of the battles which he there enumerated have undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence on the course of history. The defeat of the Persians by the Greeks, the defeat of the Mahometans by Charles Martel, and our own defeat in our struggle with the revolted colonies in America permanently affected the face of the world. But many of the battles which are called decisive by historians have in reality decided nothing; and if Sir E. Creasy had looked a little below the surface he possibly might have been attracted by a series of events which have proved more decisive than warfare. For, though the marriages of kings usually engage only a secondary attention, it may be safely stated that the decisive marriages of the world have had more influence on its fortunes than the decisive battles.

The Empire of Charles V. is, perhaps, the best example of the effect of such unions. Charles, on his paternal side, was the grandson of Maximilian of Austria and Mary, the daughter of Charles the Bold. From these grandparents he inherited Austria, Burgundy, and Flanders.[1] On the

[1] Burgundy and Flanders had been united a century before by the marriage of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, with the heiress of Louis, Count of Flanders.

maternal side he was the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, whose marriage had consolidated the houses of Aragon and Castile, and indirectly led to the union of all Spain in one monarchy. Thus the power of this great monarch had been built up by a series of marriages. It was the fate of Charles V. to strike down the power of France at Pavia, but no battle that he ever fought had effects so enduring as the marriages either of his paternal or his maternal grandparents.

But we are concerned at the present moment not with the marriages which built up the power of Spain and Austria, but with the marriages which have affected the destinies of England. They will be found recorded in every history. But their significance has been insufficiently emphasised by almost every historian. Yet they either directly occasioned or indirectly influenced many of the great events in our annals. The marriage of Bertha with Ethelbert of Kent prepared the way for the conversion of England to Christianity; the marriage of Henry VIII. with Anne Boleyn was one of the chief factors which determined the Reformation; the marriage of Emma of Normandy with Ethelred the Unready gave the Conqueror an excuse for asserting his claim to the throne of England; the marriage of Henry I. with Matilda of Scotland reconciled the people to the Conquest by restoring the line of Cerdic; the marriage of Henry II. with Eleanor of Aquitaine made England the first Continental Power in Western Europe, and thus produced the long struggle with France; the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York closed the Wars of the Roses; the marriage of Henry VII.'s daughter Margaret with James I. led to the union between England and Scotland; the marriage of Mary, James II.'s daughter, with William of Orange gave direction to the Revolution of 1688; and finally, the marriage of Sophia with the Elector of Hanover gave

us kings with German interests, and consequently again involved us in Continental struggles.

I. When Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, married Ethelbert of Kent, Christianity had been driven out of England by the victories of the Saxons. Ethelbert himself was busily raising his little kingdom into a formidable Power. In the course of a few years he succeeded in extending his supremacy over eastern England from the Humber to the Channel. He became thenceforward the most powerful monarch in Britain. Possibly his growing power suggested his ambitious marriage. His alliance with the Frankish kingdom must have increased his consideration both at home and on the Continent. But the chief consequences of the marriage were not political, but religious. Charibert naturally stipulated that his daughter, in her new home, should be allowed to profess her own religion; her chaplain was admitted to her husband's Court; a ruined church was allotted to him for Christian worship. Thus, in the heart of the little kingdom in which the Saxons had first settled, amidst the barbarous worship of the Teutonic gods, Christianity found its representative in a queen, her chaplain, and her church. The little grain of mustard-seed was sown whose branches were to cover the whole land.

While Bertha was sharing her husband's throne in Kent, Gregory the Great was noticing in the slave market at Rome the fair-haired prisoners from Deira, whose name, whose country, and whose king suggested to him a series of historic puns. He meditated thenceforward the conversion of England; and years afterwards persuaded Augustine to undertake the mission. But Augustine did not attempt to proceed to Deira, the country from which Gregory's fair-haired slaves had been brought. On the contrary, he travelled, under the protection of the Frankish king, direct to the Court in which the daughter

of the Frank was living. He naturally found a ready reception from the husband of a Christian queen, and within a year of his arrival Ethelbert embraced the new faith. But it is surely no illogical deduction from this narrative that the chief factor in Ethelbert's conversion was not Augustine's preaching, but his own marriage.[1]

II. If Rome first acquired her ascendancy in England through the marriage of Bertha, she lost her ascendancy through the marriage of Anne Boleyn. It is no doubt, in one sense, absurd to say that England owes its reformed faith to the desire of Henry VIII. to get rid of one wife and to wed another. The Church of Rome was, on the contrary, in its decay; reformers, both in England and on the Continent, were exposing its corruptions; and the Reformation would have come in England—as it came in Germany and Scotland—if Henry VIII. had never cast his longing eyes on Anne. All that it is attempted to assert is that the cause which directly led to the Reformation in England, and which governed its direction, was the desire of Henry VIII. to possess himself of Anne, and the reluctance of Rome to release him from Catherine. Hence, if England owes to one marriage the fact that she is Christian, she owes to another marriage the fact that she is Protestant. Thus, strange as it may seem to those who have never thought upon the subject, her religious life has been moulded by the marriages of Ethelbert of Kent and Henry VIII.

[1] The conversion of northern England took the same form as the conversion of Kent. Kent embraced Christianity in the last quarter of the sixth century. In the first quarter of the seventh century Northumbria had succeeded to the supremacy. Her ruler, Edwin, was by far the most powerful monarch who had ever reigned in England; and he married Ethelburga of Kent, Ethelbert's daughter. Ethelburga carried her chaplain with her to the North, just as her mother carried her chaplain with her to Kent, and through the persuasion of his queen and her chaplain Edwin, in his turn, embraced the Christian faith.

III. Very different were the consequences of the marriage of Emma of Normandy. Emma was the daughter of Duke Richard II.; she was therefore the sister of Duke Richard III. and of Duke Robert, whom his contemporaries knew as Robert the Devil, but whom history recognises as the Conqueror's father. She married Ethelred in 1002. In a political sense the marriage was a new departure. The policy of the House of Alfred had been to curb the Northmen of the Channel. Confronted with the dangers of a Norse invasion, Ethelred, on the contrary, tried to win over the Northmen of Normandy to his own side, and the policy, so far as it went, was successful. In the Danish invasions of England which occurred and recurred in the reign of the Unready King, Sweyn and his followers received no aid from their kinsfolk in Normandy; and when the whole kingdom was practically subdued, Ethelred sent his wife and her sons, and finally withdrew himself, to the duchy from which, more than a dozen years before, he had chosen his bride.

By her marriage with Ethelred, Emma had introduced Norman ideas into the Saxon Court. But, on the death of Ethelred, she found a second husband in the Danish sovereign, Canute. The marriage of Canute, like the marriage of Ethelred, was dictated by policy. He desired to gain the advantages which Ethelred had obtained from alliance with Normandy, and both he and Emma were willing to do much with this object. Both were willing to disinherit their children by their former consorts, and agree that the kingdom should fall to their own descendants. And this curious and unnatural arrangement was very nearly succeeding. On Canute's death, indeed, his throne was claimed by his son Harold, whom he had discarded in favour of Emma's children. But, on Harold's death in 1040, the Witan chose as sovereign

Emma's son, Hardicanute; and thus, if Hardicanute had only lived, the arrangement made on his mother's second marriage might have endured. Hardicanute, however, died, after a short reign of only two years, in 1042, and the choice of the people fell on his half-brother, Edward, the son of Ethelred and Emma.

Then, for the first time, the consequences of Ethelred's Norman marriage became visible. Edward had been brought up in the Court of Normandy; he came to England with a Norman retinue; he conferred the highest offices, both in Church and State, on Norman courtiers and ecclesiastics, and he thus prepared the way for the Norman invasion, which was destined to become the most striking landmark in English history. Leaning towards his Norman kinsfolk, and childless himself, Edward acknowledged William as his heir. But the future Conqueror did not chiefly rely on Edward's selection of him. He claimed the throne as the representative of Emma. As Mr. Freeman says: "It was on his descent from her that William raised his strange claim to the English crown by descent or nearness of kin." Technically, of course, such a claim—at any rate according to modern notions—was inadmissible. The real heir of the House of Alfred was Edgar Atheling, the grandson of Edmund Ironsides. But the claims of Edmund Ironsides' posterity had been set aside for forty years. Canute, Harold, Hardicanute, and Edward had all reigned in the interval. The Atheling was a boy; he had been brought up abroad, and he was not calculated to win the confidence of the Witan or the people. Practically, therefore, the choice lay between Harold, the son of Godwin, and William. Slender, however, as William's claims were, the claims of Harold—so far as birth is concerned—were still weaker. It is very doubtful whether Harold could claim that any of the royal blood, either of England

or Denmark, flowed in his veins. William, though not born in wedlock, was the nephew of the woman who had been successively queen to the Saxon Ethelred and the Dane Canute. He stood, in this way, in nearer relationship to the throne than his rival. Possibly, if he had not been Emma's nephew, his own ambition would have induced him to attempt the English conquest. But it was on his kinship with Emma, and not on his own prowess, that he himself rested his claim; and Emma's marriage deserves, therefore, to be recollected as an event which had a decisive influence on the fortunes of England.

IV. Thus the marriage of Emma paved the way for the Norman Conquest and the Norman line. The marriage of William's younger son Henry with Matilda of Scotland had the happier effect of restoring the old Saxon blood to the throne. Matilda was the daughter of Malcolm III. by his wife Margaret,[1] the sister of Edgar Atheling. Matilda, no doubt, could not be regarded as the heiress of the Saxon House of Cerdic. The true heirs were her brothers, who, one after another, ascended the Scottish throne. But though Matilda could not boast that she was the heiress of the Saxon House—though in her time, indeed, Englishmen would probably have held that no lady could be heiress to a throne—her marriage reconciled her husband's subjects to the Norman Conqueror. Edward the Confessor on his death-bed was said to have predicted that the sorrows of England should not

[1] It is singular how closely the name Margaret has been identified with the relations between England and Scotland. (1) Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling, married Malcolm III. (2) Margaret, daughter of Henry III., married Alexander III. of Scotland. (3) Her granddaughter. Margaret, the Maid of Norway, the heiress of Scotland, was betrothed to Edward I.'s son; and (4) finally, Margaret, the daughter of Henry VII., married James IV. of Scotland, and became the ancestress of the House of Stuart. The first of the Margarets, however, seems to have been christened Ædgyth.—Freeman's "Norman Conquest," v. 169.

cease till that day "when a green tree shall be cut away from the midst of its trunk, when it shall be carried away for the space of three furlongs from its root, when, without the help of any one, it shall join itself again to its trunk, and shall again put forth leaves and bear fruit in its season." The men in Henry I.'s reign who quoted, and perhaps compiled, the prophecy thought that the green tree had been cut away from its trunk when the line of Alfred was superseded on the death of the Confessor; that it was carried away for three furlongs in the three reigns of Harold and the two Williams, and that it joined itself again to its trunk when Henry was married to Matilda, and bore fruit and leaves in the Prince William and his sister Matilda.

V. Whatever importance attached to the marriage of Henry I., the marriage of his grandson, Henry II., had a much deeper significance. Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII., was the heiress of Poitou and Aquitaine. The marriage gave Henry, who had already inherited Anjou from his father and Normandy, Brittany, and Maine from his mother, the rich provinces of Poitou and Aquitaine. It gave him the whole western littoral of France, from Flanders to the Spanish frontier. The Angevin dominion, including as it did western France, the whole of England, and eastern and southern Ireland, became the largest and most formidable empire in the world. English historians are apt to dwell on the great legislation which made Henry II.'s reign memorable. His contemporaries regarded him as a Continental sovereign rather than as an English monarch. As Mrs. Green has said: "In the thirty-five years of his reign little more than thirteen were spent in England, and over twenty-one in France. Thrice only did he remain in this kingdom as much as two years at a time."

Henry's foreign policy was not, indeed, successful. At

the commencement of his reign he failed in an attack on Toulouse, which he claimed by virtue of his wife. At the close of his reign his Continental possessions were disturbed and broken up by the rebellion of his sons ; and though the great empire which he inherited was again consolidated during the reign of Richard, it was again lost during the reign of John. At the time at which Magna Charta was signed, Normandy, Maine, Brittany, and Aquitaine had all been conquered by France, and England had literally nothing on the Continent north of the Garonne. In one sense the significance of Henry's marriage with Eleanor may be thought to have terminated with these losses. But, so far from this being the case, the recollection of what once had been theirs gave the Plantagenets a regret; the little that was still left to them provided them with an opportunity. The struggle between the third Edward and Philip of Valois largely turned on the ownership of Guienne ; and the one hundred years' war with France, which fills so large a space in every History of England, might never have occurred at all if it had not been for Henry II.'s marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Large as were the political consequences of this remarkable marriage, the social consequences were even larger. So long as Bordeaux remained in the possession of an English king, a trade naturally sprang up between England and the great wine-producing provinces of southern France. Large quantities of wine were imported into England. But the loss of Aquitaine, at the close of the fourteenth century, altered these conditions, and England began importing the stronger wines of Portugal and Spain. Thus, while the connection with France increased the taste for wine, the loss of this connection forced the consumer to have recourse to stronger and therefore more intoxicating beverages. Other circum-

stances stimulated the taste which thus arose; but one cause of the drinking propensities of Englishmen, which were destined to be so unfortunately developed in the succeeding centuries, may be found in the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine, which was thus responsible not merely for the Hundred Years' War, but indirectly for the intemperance which proved more injurious than even war to the English race.

VI. The two next marriages on the list were attended with far happier consequences. The Wars of the Roses might perhaps have never occurred if the sixth Henry had inherited the ability of his father and the administrative capacity of his grandfather. But the Wars of the Roses would never have taken the form they did if the title of the House of Lancaster to the throne had been clear. According to strict modern notions of heredity, Edward IV., through his grandmother, Ann Mortimer, stood nearer to the throne than the House of Lancaster. Yet, if strict hereditary right was on the side of Edward, the Acts of the Legislature and the lapse of three reigns gave Henry VI. a still stronger title to the throne. It was not easy, in these circumstances, for any prominent Englishman to decide whether Henry or Edward had the better title; and it was therefore of the first importance to devise some means of combining the interests of the two families. As Edward IV.'s sons were dead, there was no doubt that their eldest sister, Elizabeth, was the heiress of the House of York. Henry VII. was probably the best available representative of the House of Lancaster.[1] But it naturally occurred

[1] The direct heir of John of Gaunt was the King of Castile, who was descended from John of Gaunt and his second wife, Constance. Henry VII. was, of course, only descended from his third wife, Catherine Swinford, whose elder children, though legitimatised by Act of Parliament, were born out of wedlock.

to Henry's supporters to strengthen his very doubtful claims to the throne by his marriage with Elizabeth; and, though Henry showed considerable disinclination to the marriage, he was happily compelled to yield; and the rival Roses were thus effectually blended in this fortunate union.

VII. One of the children sprung from this alliance was destined to make a still more decisive marriage. If the Wars of the Roses were practically terminated by the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York, the marriage of their daughter Margaret with James IV. led directly to the union between Scotland and England. This result was, indeed, hardly foreseen by the statesmen who projected the marriage, and more than a century passed before, on the death of Elizabeth, Margaret's great-grandson, James VI. of Scotland, became obviously the direct representative of the Tudors, the direct heir of the Saxon Cerdic.

The family which thus attained this great position proved as unworthy of rule as the later Bourbons. The first of our Stuart kings was one of the worst men, the last of them one of the worst sovereigns, that ever sat on the throne of England. But the liberties of England were chiefly won in the reigns of worthless monarchs. And the advantages which were derived from the union of the whole of Great Britain into one kingdom compensated for the disadvantages which she endured under the House of Stuart.

VIII. The misconduct of the last of these monarchs was too flagrant for Englishmen to tolerate, and the Revolution of 1688 occurred. But the Revolution would never have taken the form which it assumed if it had not been for another marriage. Mary, James's eldest daughter, and in default of his son by his second marriage his direct heir, was the wife of William of Orange; and the crown

was offered to William and Mary, with a reversion to Mary's sister Anne. Parliament thus vindicated the right, which the nation had frequently asserted in earlier days, of selecting for itself its own monarch. Unhappily neither Mary nor her sister left any posterity, and Parliament, in 1701, again interfered to settle the crown on the heirs of the Electress Sophia, being Protestants; a step which naturally brings us to the last marriage on our list.

IX. Sophia, on whose heirs the crown was thus settled, was the daughter of Elizabeth, the sister of Charles I. and the wife of the King of Bohemia. In strict hereditary right she was, therefore, further from the crown than the descendants of the first Charles, some of whom still survive. The presence of our Royal Family on the throne, therefore, is a proof that direct descent, without the will of the nation, cannot confer an absolute title on any prince. The immediate effect of the marriage, however, was to give the Kings of England a direct interest in the affairs of Germany; and we owe to this circumstance some, at least, of the wars of the eighteenth century. Happily, the existence of the Salic Law terminated the anomaly in 1837. Hanover passed away to the direct male representative of George III.; and England—so far as Europe is concerned—was practically thenceforward a synonym for the British Isles.

Here, briefly stated, are the circumstances of nine marriages which have had a large influence on the fortunes of this country. English history would not have been what it is—nay, England herself would not have been what she is—if it had not been for these marriages. And the reader who reflects on their consequences will probably agree with the conclusion which it is the object of this essay to establish: that, however much they may have been neglected by historians, the decisive marriages of England have had more effect on its development than the decisive battles.

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